ROUSSEAU WALKS THE EARTH

Sir Michael Sadler

LIKE other great figures—Aristotle, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Shakespeare, and Spinoza—five men are always cropping up, regardless of the lapse of years: Moses, Plato, St. Francis of Assisi, Napoleon, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. They haunt the world. Yet Moses had only a distant view of the Promised Land; Plato had his heart-breaking rebuff at Syracuse; St. Francis of Assisi had Brother Elias; Napoleon had his retreat from Moscow; and Rousseau had disease of the kidneys and a partly hypochondriacal terror of malignant conspiracy.

But Rousseau's spirit is alive in our world to-day. He lives again in some of the books of Mr. H. G. Wells, and in Mr. Gerald Heard's *The Source of Civilization;* he lives in the educational works of Mr. Edmond Holmes, and in the school established at Dartington Hall by Mr. Leonard Elmhirst and his wife. There is more than a whiff of Rousseau's passionate idealism and compassion in the programme of the League to Abolish Poverty and in the work of the Save the Children Fund, not to speak of Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal and the Social Credit experiments in Alberta. When we feel our souls refreshed by the spirit and quiet of the country, we owe a good deal of our joy and sensitiveness to Rousseau—perhaps to Rousseau *via* Wordsworth and Ruskin. In modern painting, Renoir's and Christopher Wood's pictures are imbued, however unconsciously, with Rousseau, who had a passion for flowers and for the grace of women, and saw the magic of common things. Rousseau's influence is present in our appreciation of what is best in Negro sculpture and other indigenous art. In music (which was another of Rous-

seau's arts) his presence is felt in Beethoven, in Schubert, in Arthur Bliss (especially in "Music for Strings"), and in the songs of Hugo Wolf. And both Stalin and Hitler, though they have travestied and twisted what they have unwittingly taken from him, drink from Rousseau's well, though Karl Marx and Fichte are in control of their respective filter-beds.

II

Like his contemporary and antitype Voltaire, Rousseau died a hundred and fifty-eight years ago—in the year in which Fanny Burney published her novel *Evelina*. He was born in 1712, two years before Queen Anne died. You will remember his portraits—his lustrous eyes, his passionate lips, and the astrakan cap which he wore with an Armenian dress. His mother died at his birth. His father was a watchmaker in Geneva. Jean-Jacques was bred on Plutarch's *Lives* and French romances. He became a stickit clerk to an attorney; then apprentice to an engraver—a wild, modern-minded lad who at sixteen ran away from Geneva and Calvinism and became the protégé at Annecy, near Aix-les-Bains, of a large-eyed, affectionate young Catholic widow, who taught him to love Nature, and also the nature of love. At twenty-nine he went to Paris, composed musical plays which charmed the critics, made women cry, and opened for him the patronage of the Court. He was elegant, fascinating, attractive to great ladies, and among intellectuals a born equal. He became what we should now call a clerk in the Treasury, and his way was clear to fortune and high society. In the daughter of an official in the Royal Mint of Orleans he found a faithful love. Thérèse Lavasseur was lively and gentle, bashful, and six years younger than he. She had good sense and won the admiration of famous men and

women by her prudent advice in difficulty and danger. She could write fairly well but had never learnt to read properly. When they lived in the rue des Petits-Champs in Paris, Jean-Jacques tried for a month to teach her how to read the clock opposite their lodgings. She was hopeless in arithmetic and never learnt the right order of the months of the year. In conversation she used words like Mrs. Malaprop. She had a scheming, leech-like mother and a crowd of impecunious relatives. But she was a child of nature and made Rousseau as happy as his nature allowed—his nature and his conscience, which pricked him because he left all his five little children in turn, nameless, in the basket outside the Foundling Hospital. He tried to justify himself by the argument that he was acting like one of the citizens of Plato's *Republic* and handing over his offspring to the State, instead of letting them grow up under bourgeois influence or in the evil company of their mother's relations. Rousseau in his thirties had a drugged conscience and the ball at his feet.

One hot day, in his thirty-eighth year, he walked out of Paris to Vincennes, where now you see the open-air Zoo. He had taken in his pocket a magazine and when hot and tired, he threw himself on the ground for rest, he chanced to see in its pages a notice that the Academy of Dijon offered a prize for an essay on the question, "Has the progress of the arts and sciences contributed more to the corruption or to the purification of morals?" The road to Vincennes was Rousseau's road to Damascus. "The moment I read those words," he says, "I beheld another world and became another man." He wrote in a transport of inspiration, won the prize, and was a converted man. In the next ten years, discarding all social ambition, resigning his post at the Treasury, simplifying all his life and habits, and earning a slender livelihood by

copying music, he published four immortal books which gave a new turn to the thought and feeling of the Western world.

III

It is difficult to see Rousseau's work and writings as a whole. Rousseau was the kind of man who cuts his bank-notes into halves and puts each half into a different book. This is a baffling habit, because the note misses its true currency value until we put the two halves together again. Locke had the same way with him. And Locke was to Rousseau what Maria Edgeworth was to the author of the Waverley novels, what Malthus was to Charles Darwin, what Constable was to Delacroix, what Ruskin (of all people) was to Proust—a trigger of the mind.

Rousseau was caught by Locke's theory of a social contract. The theory of the Social Contract had fallen below par. But the word was a metaphor, intended to describe the first nucleated beginnings of human society. Locke (a sensible man with his feet on the ground) said: "However *vox populi vox Dei* has prevailed as a maxim, I do not remember when ever God delivered his oracles by the multitude, or Nature [disclosed her] truths by the crowd." Rousseau would have agreed with this. He knew that, though parliaments are venerable, a parliamentary electorate is not necessarily a blessed company of faithful people.

The philosophers (a close corporation in these days) disliked and distrusted Rousseau because he was fundamentally religious. The devout Catholic or Protestant distrusted and denounced him because his theology was heterodox. John Wesley, reading one of Rousseau's books on the pommel of his saddle, said: "This Rousseau is a

coxcomb." Among the philosophers, Voltaire was not nice to Rousseau, and Diderot and Hume (both honest men) quarrelled with him and even made his life a burden. Rousseau's religion when he wrote *Emile* was like Locke's, but raised to a much higher temperature of emotional intensity. There are bits of the Savoyard Vicar like great passages in Wordsworth's *Prelude*. But the time came when Rousseau's religion took on a more sombre colour and a deeper poignancy.

The fascination of Rousseau indeed lies only partly in the magic of his style. But what a language, what a culture is that of France that it can flower into a Pascal, a Bossuet, a Rousseau, and a Voltaire! And Rousseau, though he may not be the greatest of the four, is the most highly charged with emotional electricity. It is hard to read much at a time of some of his books. They set one's mind buzzing by their intensity and sparkle.

He paints his self-portrait as he looked under the stress of creative excitement. "Glittering eye, flushed face, trembling limbs, palpitations of the heart which grip the throat and choke speech." But he learnt to relax.

All his life Rousseau went on learning.

(1) He began in boyhood with a strong sense of duty to his country and of the political power of what the Romans called virtue. His early classical education fortified his purpose. *Abeunt studia in mores.*

(2) He arrived at the conclusion that the environment in which we are brought up and live is the chief cause of our feelings, of our ideas, of our actions. Dr. Barnardo thought the same, and so did Robert Owen. So did Plato. Rousseau laid stress on nutrition, on climate, on noise, on silence, on seasonal changes, on sunlight, on repose, on colours: a very modern list, more modern than anything Robert Owen drew up. And his conclusion is that we

must try more and more to control the environment of men and women. So thought Robert Owen. So thinks Soviet Russia. Rousseau points towards a degree of control over human life far exceeding anything conceived in his day or realized in ours. But his psychology, like Locke's, is oversimplified, his science elementary. Compare with what Rousseau wrote Dr. Alexis Carrol's *L'homme, cet inconnu*. Our knowledge goes deeper than Rousseau's. And the difficulty of dealing drastically with the problem appears to us greater than it appeared to him.

(3) Rousseau's reflections on the human lot convinced him that "everything is radically connected with politics." The question of the best possible government presented itself to him in the following form: What kind of government is best adapted to produce the most enlightened, the wisest, the best people? Rousseau saw, no one has ever seen more clearly, the supreme value of the individual. But the whole trend of his writings is not towards *laisser-faire*, still less towards individual independence of governmental control, but towards the skilful construction of public administration, penetrating in its influence on private as well as public life. And to-day the spirit of Rousseau discloses itself not in individualism but in strong policies of governmental control.

(4) He was no crude materialist, though he believed that mind and spirit are in great measure dependent on the body. In his best hours, Rousseau lived in the presence of what he believed to be God. "I can think," he wrote, "of no worthier homage to the Divine Being than the mute admiration which is aroused by the contemplation of His work."

IV

For four years after his conversion, after "the uprooting of his vanity," Rousseau was "intoxicated with virtue." For the time, like Spinoza, he was a "God-intoxicated man." "During the four years at least," he wrote, "during which this effervescence lasted in all its force, there was nothing great or beautiful, which a man's heart could contain, of which I was not capable between heaven and myself. This was the origin of my sudden eloquence, of the truly celestial fire which inflamed me and spread over my first writings, though for forty years before it had not put forth the least spark, because it was not yet kindled." In this uplifted mood he sacrificed all worldly gain, consideration, and ambition. "Writing for bread would have stifled my genius. It is difficult to think nobly when one thinks only to live."

His talents were kept fresh by a strong natural curiosity—a curiosity similar to that of Richard Lovell Edgeworth. "I myself," Rousseau wrote, "was in the happy condition of knowing little enough for everything to appear new to me, and yet of knowing enough to make everything intelligible to me." His enemies said that he was a rhetorician with a smattering of knowledge and a bad memory. The verdict of history was otherwise.

But besides his kidney trouble and disease of the urethra, Rousseau had to struggle against the curse of self-consciousness. It made him awkward; at times, by reaction, it made him overbold. By severe self-discipline he stamped out this affliction. The remedy was submission, the practice of a Buddhist's internal peace, the patient self-abnegation of a Khmer sage. But as he grew old the weakness returned in another form. He became preternaturally suspicious of conspiracies against his free-

dom and even against his life. His suspicions, which drove him even from a secure retreat near Ashburne in Derbyshire, were not wholly groundless.

V

For all his impurity, Rousseau was pure in heart. He suffered and was buried. Men reviled him and persecuted him and said all manner of evil against him, much of it false. And yet in his anguish something rejoiced within him and he found his reward.

At the centre of his nature, behind the wilful, skilful, obstinate propaganda of his redeeming compassion, was the heavenly naïveté of a child. His love for suffering humanity was so poignant, so unalloyed that it was dangerous not only to himself but to others, an indestructible compassion which is half-sister to revolution.

And in the great debate to which his writings have given rise, what part will the English bear?

It will, I hope, be our portion to keep a steady mind—a mind that does not lose hold of reality; a mind which will not surrender to half-truths, not blinded by hope nor scared by danger: willing, as the price of keeping itself sensitive to the undercurrents of conflicting truths, to bear the reproach of not finding words to fit the complex pattern of its feelings; instinctively remembering all the *per contras* in the balance sheet of argument, and guarding, as the guarantee of its inner integrity, its awareness of the indecipherable complexity of man's relation to man and to his future.

WILLIAM JAMES AND AMERICAN IDEALS[1]

G. S. Brett

I

WILLIAM JAMES was born in 1842 and lived till 1910. In those sixty-eight years American thought and literature, as the expression and symbol of changing ideas, passed through more than one significant crisis. The history of such a period of time can be pieced together by the diligent student, the facts and the dates can be arranged faultlessly, the writers can be successively named, appraised, and interred; but the history as an experience and the life of those days as it was actually lived, will escape any but the rarest genius. For that reason biography has some distinct advantages over general history: it can exhibit events as experience and achieve a special kind of unity by looking at things continually from one centre. To do this with success the biographer must be content to ignore whatever falls outside the actual experience of his chosen subject, and above all else he must choose a life sufficiently radiant and complex to make the whole picture significant. All thinkers, and especially those who cultivate what James called the specially obstinate way of thinking, namely philosophy, are notoriously bad subjects for the biographer: as a rule a few remarks about birth, death, and marriage (if any) precede the inevitable confession that the rest of the life must be identified with the published works.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to discover anyone who differed as much as James from this type.

[1] *The Thought and Character of William James, as revealed in unpublished correspondence and notes, together with his published writings*, by Ralph Barton Perry. Vol. I: *Inheritance and Vocation*. Vol. II: *Philosophy and Psychology*. Little, Brown, and Company, 1936. All subsequent notes refer to volume and page of this work.

As the fifteen hundred and ninety-four pages of his work demonstrate, Professor Perry has never lacked material. This is not by any means the first book about James—it is not even the first collection of his letters; but the reader will not be troubled by any feeling that the work has been done before nor fail to realize the immense value of this particular synthesis of the facts about James. Though the title, chosen probably to avoid confusion with other existing volumes, does not proclaim the fact, this work is concerned with the antecedents, family relations, education, development, academic career, and international relations which make up that section of human history called the life of William James. The range of this material justifies the claim that it represents a picture of American life during the past century in some of its most important and most enduring aspects. If the noises of the outer world rarely penetrate, political events appear only in casual reference, business occupies attention only so long as William James of Albany, "progenitor of the tribe," is in the picture, and the stock-market is conspicuous by its absence, this is the natural consequence of that process which made Henry James the elder primarily a speculative thinker, Henry James the younger an introspective novelist, and William James a novel kind of philosopher. William James of Albany was an emigrant from Ireland in the great days of opportunity, thrice married, the father of fourteen children, and the maker of a fortune "estimated at $3,000,000."[2] This was a good basis, much needed. Apparently big business was predestined (William of Albany being a staunch Calvinist) to defray the expenses of great thinking. Henry James the elder was the victim of an accident which caused "permanent impairment of bodily capacity."[3] At a later

[2] I, p. 5. [3] I, p. 7.

date Henry James the novelist could write, "The rupture with my grandfather's tradition was complete; we were never in a single case, I think, for two generations guilty of a stroke of 'business'."

How much can be attributed to the accident which excluded the elder Henry James from an active physical life, will presumably remain unknown. Some importance in the whole sequence of events must certainly be given to the fact that the elder Henry became a theological student, studied at Princeton, experienced a change of heart in a direction not considered praiseworthy, and so became the champion of what in 1840 was new thought. As author of many works in that ambiguous field which might be called "theosophy" to distinguish it from the more orthodox "theology," the elder Henry came into contact with such men as Swedenborg, Fourier, and Emerson. The part of Professor Perry's book entitled *His Father's Son* deals with this period. It might seem disproportionate in length and detail, but no one would wish to have it omitted. The peculiar epoch of seething discontent combined with unabated religious fervour, is illuminated by the intimate tone of the letters; this was the real era of transition from an age for which the foundations, if neither deep nor wide, were at least sure, to that later chaos of doubt and argument and conflict which has left behind it deep gulfs between religion, philosophy, natural science, and commercial industry. In 1856 it was still possible for a certain Mrs. Cranch[4] to wonder "what the Lord *would* do with these French people" and for Henry James (senior) to wonder what could be done with "any European people." But the doubt is quickly cast aside: it is certain that He will bring about "a new and denationalized humanity," in fact the world was on the eve

[4] I, p. 123.

of the great age of harmony of which Fourier's schemes, Brook Farm, Emerson's lectures, and even Carlyle's gospel seemed unmistakable harbingers. But the light began to fade early. In 1868 Henry James can write, "Emerson's unreality to me grows ever more;" ultimately he was assessed as "an eminently sacred person" but virtually empty. Mr. Carlyle was also given up; the rumblings ceased to be mysterious and the sentiments proved depressing. Though time and patience are needed to read these prolix documents, the reward is there. For it is astonishing to discover the shrewdness with which character is judged and the convincing aptness of the phrase used to express a judgment. The secret lies in the great sincerity of the writers: they pondered and compared and estimated until at last conviction emerged; they speak their own language, but they seem to feel responsible to the world for the truth they utter. Perhaps here we are contemplating the last glow of Puritanism, the lingering sense of a high calling, and the conscientious desire to do even trivial things "as in the great Taskmaster's eye."

II

From the more general background the figure of William James emerges. It is not necessary to linger over the details of his early education, but for the understanding of the later years it is essential to remember how large a part was played in that education by variety of places and interests. What Professor Perry calls "their father's domestic philosophy" was in fact the guiding principle of an apparently disconnected sequence of events. The prophets of new thought in education can find in this domestic philosophy one more proof that novelty is a very relative term; for Henry James (senior) believed in pro-

viding "an atmosphere of freedom," considered that "parental affection is a dangerous passion, tending to become possessive," and put his theory into practice by trying different forms of education and travelling in the more acceptable countries of Europe. France, Germany, and Switzerland figure largely in the record of these years. The wide outlook which was characteristic in different ways of William and of Henry James, was the product of this formative period with its variety of scenery, languages, and national politics. The more immediate result in the case of William was an inclination to become a painter; this receded into the background in 1861 when he began to study science at Harvard. The first part of science to be attacked was chemistry, but William was not inclined to restrain his natural curiosity or accept limitations prematurely: comparative anatomy and medicine were found attractive: by 1864 he had definitely "embraced the medical profession." The routine of medical study was interrupted in 1865 when James went with Agassiz to Brazil as one of a group engaged in biological research, with other activities included in the general plan of a scientific expedition. A curious feature of this period in the life of William James is the persistent undercurrent of development which ran below the surface of his apparent occupations. The expedition produced nothing so much as a conviction that such occupations were not attractive. The work of the Medical School, resumed in 1866, was continued with the growing conviction that the practice of medicine was positively repugnant. Slowly but strongly the interest in philosophy grew and became predominant, though even here it is obvious that the development was rather away from, than towards, the established schools. The statement made by James himself in 1902 is the best comment: "I origin-

ally studied medicine in order to be a physiologist, but I drifted into psychology and philosophy from a sort of fatality. I never had any philosophic instruction, the first lecture on psychology I ever heard being the first I ever gave."

The transitions which James made from one academic department to another, are not so unintelligible as a bald narrative would make them appear. In 1873 specialization had not reached its present height: if James decided to remain in biology, that term meant for him anatomy, physiology, and such extensions of these subjects as would fall to-day in neurology and physiological psychology. In fact James was moving with a broad stream of forces. Modern specialization has not been merely disruptive of the old and settled departments of knowledge; it has also produced new synthetic products by joining fragments detached from the parent stock. This process was going on in Europe most obviously about 1850; and that familiarity with things European which came naturally to the James family as the legacy of its education, accounts to some degree for the variety and the unity which Henry and William exhibited in their different ways. From physiology to philosophy might seem a perilous leap; but in fact the passage was made on convenient stepping-stones. In Germany, Mueller the physiologist, Lotze the medical psychologist and philosopher, and other less conspicuous workers, between 1840 and 1870 constructed what was to be known for a quarter of a century as the new psychology. James was the living embodiment of this age of transition. When Eliot, as president of Harvard, offered him the opportunity of taking "the whole department" (physiology and anatomy), he recoiled. He felt that his vocation was "to fight it out

in mental science;"[5] but a week later he told Eliot he would "accept the anatomical instruction for next year" and he anticipated remaining in that department. His reason for the decision is as clear and deep as his intuitions generally were: he understood with accurate penetration that "philosophical activity as a *business* is not normal for most men," and "to make the *form* of all possible thought the prevailing *matter* of one's thought breeds hypochondria." This is the voice of reason uttering wisdom, but neither the character nor the thought of William James was enslaved by reason. In spite of these truths and premonitions, James proceeded steadily along the pathway of inclination. From anatomy and physiology he moved on to the relations between physiology and psychology; a year later he was teaching "Physiological Psychology" with Herbert Spencer as his textbook. Evolutionism was then the new ferment in the intellectual world, and those general principles which always interested James began to occupy him in and out of the classroom. The next step was to transfer the course from natural history to philosophy, though the teacher remained assistant professor of physiology. The subsequent fluctuations in the career of James need not be told in detail, nor can we linger over the question who first began experimental psychology in America. It is clear that James began very early to "try things" and had many original ideas about things which should be tried; but the dispute is not too important, because James was, in fact, always in pursuit of general principles and consequently more inclined to teach the doctrine that ideas must be put to the test of action than to subdue his restless mind to the toil and discipline of routine work in the laboratory. The publication of *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890 defined the

[5] I, p. 341.

place James was to occupy in the history of modern psychology. The book was in a large sense autobiographical; it was the story of an adventure and the record of a journey through fields of thought known separately to many men but not surveyed by anyone as a whole and from a distance. Germany, France, Switzerland, and England had made their contributions; anatomy, physiology, hypnotism, and psychical research played their parts; the older philosophical traditions were not forgotten nor rejected; extremes met because James himself was interested in everything from nerve currents to the immortality of the soul, and, for the same reason, that isolation and antagonism of views about nature and mind which have since been conspicuous were significantly absent.

III

The fact that James was sometimes officially professor of psychology and sometimes professor of philosophy, or that he ended his days in philosophy rather than psychology, is unimportant except in so far as it reflects similar oscillations in the development of American thought. The influence of James in his own country was due mainly to his conception of the nature of man, which in turn can be traced to the combination of very diverse factors in his education and family life. In the explanation which he gave of his aims when he first began to develop the mental aspects of physiology, he rightly argued that psychology would never expand properly so long as the teachers had only a literary background. This was in effect a challenge to American education to break away from its dominant ideas and look at life from a more comprehensive elevation. Unlike some of his contemporaries who were definitely at war with the academic theology of

the period, and equally unlike some of his followers who saw no value in any kind of speculative thinking, James was definitely creating that more comprehensive outlook which would include within its expanded territory new views of religion and new interpretations of philosophy. This was amply demonstrated in the final stages of his thought when his views on the varieties of religious experience and the principles of pragmatism showed the full possibilities of the theories embedded in the work on psychology.

The correspondence between William and his brother Henry explains many points in their common, but also divergent, attitudes to life. William followed his brother's work with the most conscientious solicitude; he read the writings as they appeared and commented on them in a manner which suggests not only brotherly love but complete confidence in his own powers of criticism. William could never feel satisfied that Henry appreciated, or even wanted to appreciate, that glowing warmth and almost boisterous vitality which for William was real life. He feared, not without reason, that Henry would become more and more tenuous and meticulous in thought and style, a result to be deplored partly because it was the wrong way to depict the world and partly because it could never attract the public. Writing in 1868, William tells Henry that his stories "show a certain neatness and airy grace of touch" but there is in them a coldness, "a want of heartiness or unction."[6] "It seems to me that a story must have rare picturesque elements of some sort, or much action, to compensate for the absence of heartiness." It will probably be agreed that William represented a very common and natural point of view in these comments, but his attitude was, from Henry's point of view, exactly

[6] I, p. 263.

that popular view of the novelist's vocation which Henry felt it his mission to reform. It is not certain that Henry read his brother's writings; his acknowledgments and comments are usually vague, with little more than such sentiments as were inspired by genuine affection and goodwill. Henry repeatedly assures the different members of his family that he has a "very elevated idea of the abilities" of his brother, and the brother never seems to have suspected that anything was wrong with his estimate of Henry's artistic ideals. About *The Europeans*, published in 1879, William said it was "thin and empty," there was no "fatness" or "bigness" in it; in general, matter was sacrificed to form. Henry acknowledges the criticism but supplies the further comment that the result is due to his artistic conscience, "which is so greatly attached to *form* that it shrinks from believing that it can supply it properly for *big* subjects." William does not appear to have taken this hint that his brother differed from him on the question of perfection; criticisms in the same vein continued for the next twenty-six years, during which, with the blindness of an elder brother, William appears not to have noticed how independently Henry went his own way. In 1905, Henry's patience was exhausted and he expressed himself thus: "I mean (in response to what you write me of your having read the *Golden Bowl*) to try to produce some uncanny form of thing, in fiction, that will gratify you, as Brother—but let me say, dear William, that I shall greatly be humiliated if you *do* like it, and thereby lump it, in your affection, with things, of the current age, that I have heard you express admiration for and that I would sooner descend to a dishonoured grave than have written."[7] After this prelude Henry refers to "the awful truck that surrounds us" and frankly

[7] I, p. 424.

says that his brother asks from him nothing less than the sacrifice of his ideals. In a sense the conflict was definite, and yet in their way as products of the same education the brothers had the same intellectual aims. For Henry, the common literary output was "awful truck," a term which presumably applied to the sentimental and superficial pictures of life which he regarded as lacking both form and power of interpretation. For William, this awful truck had its counterpart in the outpourings of the Hegelian philosophers; in language which recalls the bitterness of Schopenhauer they are described as white-robed saints, and the progress of Professor Palmer among his colleagues is followed with mingled pity and disgust as that good man sinks deeper and deeper in the morass of dialectic.

With the instincts and sentiments of a man trained in the natural sciences, James waged perpetual war against Hegelianism. The earlier revolt against Calvinism and the narrowest type of Puritanism had been the work of men like Emerson and the makers of Transcendentalism. The benefits of that conflict were negative rather than positive; if it opened wider horizons and promised a new atmosphere of thought, it left behind the uneasy suspicion that the road would lead to the void. The second and later movement was different in character. It owed its origin to the enterprise of Henry C. Brokmeyer, who migrated from Germany and settled in St. Louis. With him was associated William T. Harris, a teacher in the public schools, who later became United States Commissioner of Education. Between them these two men created the St. Louis movement in philosophy, which consisted chiefly of imported German idealism. The *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, which still occupies a large space in many libraries, was the organ of the St. Louis Philosophical

Society, and its pages were used for the publication of lengthy translations from Fichte, Schelling, and other leaders of German thought. The services of W. T. Harris to American education have been fully recognized; at present we are concerned only with the fact that this was the outstanding philosophical movement of the middle period of the century (1866-1875) and as such was the antagonist that James was obliged to attack. The fight went on merrily. So far as James was concerned, seriousness was never marred by bitterness. Though he always used Hegel as the prize example of the way philosophy should not be expounded, James was quite able to appreciate the definite contribution which Hegel had made to the philosophical heritage. Also, it must be remembered that James was responsible for discovering Royce at the time when that young man complained (or boasted?) that he was the lone philosopher of the Pacific coast and the only thinker west of the Rockies. From California, Royce finally came to Harvard through the good services of James, and no one understood better than Royce the magnanimity with which James conducted his professional battles. It has been said that at Harvard appointments were made with the intention of having on the staff men who represented conflicting points of view. When Palmer, Royce, Santayana, Muensterberg, and James were all teaching, this ideal may be said to have been realized. The individuals knew their differences and at times the exchange of criticisms involved hard blows that might have been fatal to friendship, but through all these dangers kindliness persisted and survived. The following epitaph on Royce, the main supporter of the idealism James incessantly strove to annihilate, is too good to be left unquoted:

He died from an excess of loud garrulity
Not, indeed, greatly missed by science
Nor ever, forsooth, understood by his faithful disciples
But sincerely lamented by his creditors.[8]

This may well have been the opinion of his critics, including James, but it is significant that Royce composed it himself and that it is part of the inscription he wrote in that copy of his greatest book which he presented to James! The conflict between James and Royce was not only conducted with unfailing courtesy on both sides; it was also a positive source of mutual benefit. They agreed sincerely on the point so well expressed by James when he wrote, "The only thing we see differently is the Absolute, and surely such a trifle as that is not a thing for two gentlemen to be parted by."[9]

IV

The philosophical doctrine which James finally evolved is not easily described in a few words. To trace its development in detail would be to follow the footsteps of James through many years and more than one country. Germany provided a stimulus and an ideal in the work and character of Lotze; but as the home of that "Absolute," which Lotze derided and James detested, Germany was significant chiefly as a warning. England played its part largely through the influence of Shadworth Hodgson. Hodgson, after being for many years a medical doctor, gave up his practice, settled in London, and became the central figure in the group which created the Aristotelian Society. The admiration which James felt for Hodgson can be explained by the fact that Hodgson was an advocate of empiricism and a supporter of the anti-Hegelian

[8]The original is in German; this translation is given in I, p. 820.
[9]I, p. 822.

movement when Edward Caird and T. H. Green were already dominating the field of British thought. But even in the letters of James it is clear that Hodgson was not destined to achieve a major triumph, and, in fact, he gradually recedes into the background. A more powerful influence was exerted by France in the person of Renouvier, who may still be counted among the important thinkers of the nineteenth century. But all these factors in the life of James were really little more than sympathetic minds with which he communicated and to which his generosity attributed more than his actual debt. The unconventional way in which James talked and wrote conceals the earnestness of his thinking and the protracted struggles through which he reached his conclusions. If Professor Perry's volumes did no more than reveal this characteristic, they would have rendered a great service both to the friends of James and to students of philosophy in general. The qualities of thought and expression which brought James so much popularity had also their appropriate defects. It was inevitable that, for many, Pragmatism appeared to be not so much a philosophy as a way of doing without philosophy, while for others it assumed the sinister appearance of a compromise between eternal truths and business methods. The popular appeal of such phrases as "the will to believe" or "the energies of men" served mainly to distract attention from the essential principles of this new way of thinking.

No attempt can be made either to explain or to estimate the meaning of Pragmatism in the limits of this article. James made Pragmatism, and it can be most clearly understood by considering the dominant factors in the mind of James. These were, briefly, the scientific trend of the early stage, the long occupation with the borderland of physiology and mental activity which re-

sulted in his psychology, and the deep interest in persons which marked every stage of his career. To emphasize this last point is not to upset the true balance of judgment. The storm-centre of the whole movement of thought after Hegel's brief supremacy, was the question of the status and rights of the individual both as thinker and as citizen. Because the demon of the Absolute threatened to set up a "block universe" to be passively contemplated in place of a world of opportunity always in the making and continually being made by human effort (these being the words of James), it was the mission of Pragmatism to array against it all the arguments available. Among these must be counted the general idea of evolution, the sense for changes not wholly predictable, the feeling for the adventure of living in an age which was demolishing the rigid structure of the universe and setting up process, movement, and creative activity as the inner nature of reality. In its broadest lines the doctrine of the Pragmatists must be regarded as an interpretation of developments characteristic of modern life, and to interpret in this way is the vocation of philosophy. James would be the last man to claim that he had provided the world with its final philosophy; even the most enthusiastic supporters have found difficulty in a mode of thought which gave so much scope to emotional drives, indeterminate choice, and the apparent right of man to make, rather than discover, the laws of the universe. But these problems must be left as they now stand: whatever the future may produce, the life and work of William James will remain an important part of the history of thought and leave its mark on the road of human progress.

ALEXANDER SERGEYEVITCH PUSHKIN
1799-1837

A. F. B. Clark

Un Athénien captif parmi les Scythes. Prosper Mérimée.

Everything is intelligible to us—both the sharp Gallic thought,
And the misty Germanic genius."
Alexander Blok, *The Scythians.*

On February 10, 1937, will occur an event unique in Russian annals since the Revolution. During at least a minute's truce, every man and woman of the Russian race—whether White or Red, whether Soviet citizen in the cities and fields of Russia, or *émigré* "going up and down another's stairs" in Paris or Tokio—will be just a Russian once more, as he or she bows in silent tribute before the memory of Alexander Sergeyevitch Pushkin, who died on that day a hundred years ago. The man who has brought about this miracle of the communion of feud-riven souls in a racial heritage—something that no figure in political or military or religious history, not even any other artist in letters or music or painting, not Turgeniev or Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky, has been able to accomplish—this man surely deserves the tribute of a moment's attention even from the foreigner.

The history and present status of Pushkin's reputation bristle with paradox. This pure aristocrat who is the idol of proletarian Russia, this universal European poet who is a closed book to a Europe gorged with "exotic" Russian literature, this founder of Russian letters who suffered an eclipse in Russia itself for some years after his death, this "romantic" of the literary manuals who is perhaps the most truly classical of modern writers in

temper and style—what is one to make of him and how is the truth about him to be presented to the foreign reader? When this reader is Anglo-Saxon, the difficulty is increased, for few adequate translations into English of his works are available, though by the time these lines appear in print the deficiency may be in some degree remedied.[1] However, even in countries provided with fairly adequate and complete translations—such as Germany—it remains true that access to the essence of Pushkin's genius is possible only to those acquainted with Russian, for he is one of those writers—like Racine and La Fontaine in France or like Keats in England—whose charm resides primarily in his style, in his mastery of his medium, and that medium, Russian, has such marked idiosyncrasies that to attempt to translate it into another idiom is enough, as Melchior de Vogüé said, to drive one "mad with despair."

A superficial idea of Pushkin's position in Russian—and European—literature may, however, be gained if we consider briefly the historical *milieu* from which he sprang. In Pushkin's childhood, Russian literature was being brought to birth by such mid-wives as Karamzin, Zhukovsky, Krylof, and Derzhavin, just as in Dante's youth Italian was being forged into a literary language by Guinizelli and Cavalcanti. Pushkin occupies in Russian literature much the same historical position that Dante

[1] I am able to add in proof that there has just been issued a substantial volume of nearly nine hundred pages, containing in English translation a good part (but by no means all) of what is valuable in Pushkin's output (both verse and prose): *The Works of Alexander Pushkin*, selected and edited by Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Random House, New York, 1936. It includes a complete and admirable translation of Pushkin's *magnum opus*, *Yevgeni Oniegin*. The Introduction gives the most up-to-date sketch of Pushkin's life at present available in English. For biography and criticism see also: D. S. Mirsky's *Pushkin*, 1926, and *History of Russian Literature*, 1927, and Maurice Baring's *Outline of Russian Literature* and Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*, 1924.

occupies in Italian letters. From these men as from watersheds the literary language and the literature of their peoples flow. But in the Russian case foreign influence combined in a singular manner with the national idiom and tradition. And just here it may be remarked that those people who contemn the methods of Comparative Literature must find Pushkin a hard nut to crack. He cannot be understood—his position in European letters and the paradoxical neglect of him in Western Europe cannot be understood—unless we regard him as a joint product of Russian tradition and of that French culture in which his class (the old nobility) was immersed. As a boy, Pushkin's reading was almost wholly in French literature—and in the French literature of the eighteenth century. Voltaire, Parny, and—somewhat later—André Chénier were his first models, and from them he learned that respect for elegance, for classical perfection of form, for sobriety in the use of figures, and for a certain show of worldly *insouciance*, which remained among the marks of his style till the end. For those who thoughtlessly classify Pushkin as "the Russian romantic" it should be added that for the French Romantic School, into the era of which he lived, Pushkin never had the slightest appreciation. He constantly—in his letters and elsewhere—refers to the "state of decadence into which French literature has fallen" in his time; and the few exceptions he allows to this anathema—such as Alfred de Musset and Prosper Mérimée—are surely very significant in themselves.

To these French influences were added later the influence of Sir Walter Scott and, above all, of Byron. Pushkin is sometimes dubbed "the Russian Byron." No description of him could be more superficial. All that he took from Byron was a fondness—at a certain period

of his career—for "local colour," for the picturesque, for the exotic setting (which, however, he characteristically chose from places he had himself visited—the Caucasus, the Crimea, Bessarabia), and also his enthusiasm for individual liberty. But of Byron's heaven-storming Titanism, his bitter and egotistic misanthropy, his morbid subjectivity, and his extravagant rhetoric, there is not a trace in Pushkin; no qualities (or defects) are more foreign to his Attic nature with its instinctive distrust of all that is excessive.

His great German contemporaries, Schiller and Goethe, he of course knew. I am not competent to say what influence they may have exerted on him, though *Boris Godunov* has been said to resemble a Schillerian drama rather than a Shakespearean one, and though among Pushkin's dramatic fragments is a "Scene from Faust." There is nothing in Pushkin of the German love of metaphysics. But the great foreign influence of his later years was Shakespeare, not only in matters of dramatic technique (where, despite his early French training, he declared boldly that the method of Shakespeare rather than that of Racine was the one best suited to the Russian stage), but in the deepening of his search for objectivity, for detachment, which is so marked in his later works. On the other hand, he avoided Shakespeare's highly metaphorical mode of expression as much as he did Byron's rhetoric.

I have dwelt on these foreign influences on Pushkin, because his profound assimilation of so many disparate foreign modes (the capacity for such assimilation is characteristically Slavic) makes him in the supreme degree a European writer, a superb example of the *homo europaeus*, whom, at first sight, we might expect Western

Europe to clasp to its bosom with enthusiasm.[2] Why, then, the peculiar coldness towards Pushkin, the reluctance to admit his greatness, to accept his fellow-countrymen's estimate of him, which has marked Western criticism almost to the present day? It is not that he lacked able champions in Western Europe, particularly in France, where a great man of letters ideally suited to be his sponsor, Prosper Mérimée, waged an energetic campaign of criticism and translation in his favour. Turgeniev, who once said that he would give all his novels for four lines from Pushkin's poem *A Conversation between the Poet and his Publisher*, used to translate his great countryman by the hour to Flaubert, but that confirmed romantic refused to be interested ("il est plat, votre poète"). Pushkin was introduced to English readers even before his death, in the pages of *The Foreign Review* (1827); yet he seems to need introduction to-day as much as ever.

Of course, the answer to our question is staring us in the face all the time. It is just *because* Pushkin is a European poet, and not a Russian "exotic," that we refuse to be interested in him (apart, of course, from the difficulty of apprehending him properly in translation). The claim of Russian literature to the attention of the Western world in search of new sensations, was that it was "different," that it was outside the European tradition, that it was half-Asiatic, that it expressed a "Russian soul." Why it was that Russian literature, shortly after the death of Pushkin, did begin to develop something of this "exotic" quality (though the matter has been greatly exaggerated) would be an interesting question to follow up, if space did not forbid. All I can permit myself here is the suggestion that the abandonment by post-Push-

[2]This supreme place as the great European poet is what Dostoyevsky claimed for Pushkin in his famous Pushkin Address.

kinian writers of his distrust of Western Romanticism and the consequent inflow into Russia of Hugo's and Hoffmann's love of the grotesque, of George Sand's romantic individualism and romantic sociology, of Baudelaire's Satanism and of Stendhal's superman, may have more than a little to do with it, and that it may turn out ironically that the "Russian soul" is to a considerable extent at least a reflection of the Western romantic soul raised to the n^{th} power. The fact is that Russia was a "backward" country; she got European movements after they were worn out in the West. Classicism came to her half-a-century after it had begun to disappear in France, England, and Germany; Pushkin is a belated classical poet (an "epigone"), and Western Europe was too impatient to examine whether he might not be the purest of his type as well as the last. By the time Romanticism was over its prime in the West, Russia was catching up. Her Romantics were not too late to catch the second Romantic wave, and they rode into triumph on its crest.

If we have in some measure solved the problem of Pushkin's relation to European literature, we have yet to explain his cult in present-day Russia and his eclipse during the period 1840-80. This task will involve a glance at the political background of his time. He lived during the reigns of the pseudo-liberal Alexander I and the reactionary Nicholas I. Brought up as he was on Voltaire, he was in his youth anti-religious and irreverent towards authority, in the French "philosophe" manner, to such an extent that he incurred the displeasure of Alexander, and was banished from the capital to Southern Russia and later confined for two years to his parents' estate at Mihailovskoye. In the course of these wanderings he became associated with many of the men who were later

to be implicated in the Decembrist revolt, and, though he never joined the secret societies, he sympathized with their aims fairly openly, and when, on the death of Alexander in 1825, the revolt broke out and was suppressed, he escaped being sent to Siberia only by a hair's-breadth. With the accession of Nicholas I, his whole attitude changes, partly through the diplomacy of the monarch, partly, apparently, from his own conviction that resistance was hopeless. He becomes the imperialist poet, the singer of the glories and the destinies of Petrine Russia—to all intents and purposes a poet-laureate. Yet it is in these very years that the younger generation of Russian writers is turning to radicalism and romanticism, particularly under the leadership of Belinsky. This school looks with disfavour on Pushkin's classicism and conservatism, and above all on his theory of the detachment of the poet from practical and political questions. Literature is becoming, already before Pushkin's death, what it was to remain ever afterwards in Russia, primarily a medium for the discussion of moral and political problems. Pushkin's "pure poetry" point of view falls from favour, and it is not until Dostoyevsky's celebrated eulogy of him, on the occasion of the erection of a Pushkin monument in Moscow in 1880, that he recovers all (and more than) his lost ground. The view then prevails that Pushkin is the representative poet of the Russian people, that indeed he is more than that, that he is, in Dostoyevsky's famous word "pan-anthropos," the representative poet of humanity, that humanity which it is Holy Russia's mission to save. All this may be very exaggerated (and very un-Pushkinian in spirit), but it explains the extraordinary Pushkin-worship of the last forty years of the old regime.

But how to explain his continued favour under the new regime? The superficial explanation is, of course,

his youthful radicalism (his blasphemous poem, the *Gavriiliada*, must give great joy to the "anti-God" societies) and his association with the Decembrists, all of whom, aristocrats though they were, are in the Pantheon of Soviet Russia. The impossibility of giving a Marxian interpretation to his works is forgiven him—after all, he was dead years before *Das Kapital* appeared. But I think there are causes which go deeper. I think that, for one thing, Pushkin has benefited from the disfavour into which Turgeniev, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky have fallen (as regards their thought-content; as artists they are still greatly admired) just because they were propagandists whose propaganda is displeasing to the Bolsheviks. Then, the new Russia has inherited the conviction of the old Russia that it has a mission to save the world, and Pushkin as "pan-anthropos" can still remain the symbol of that mission. But the subtler reasons are perhaps unavowed. Pushkin is the poet of "Everyman." It is truer of him than of Shakespeare or Dante or Goethe that he who runs may read him. He requires no glossary, no learned commentary. His works do not raise "problems." Subtle though he is in a sense, his subtlety is not of the intellect but of the sensibilities and is unlikely to baffle any member of a "chootky"[3] race. No French writer is a more perfect model of clarity and order than Pushkin is. Now it is the belief of Soviet Russia that great literature ought to be accessible to the average man, that it should deal with the experiences of normal men expressed in the simplest language. Pushkin meets this requirement perfectly. Lenin used to protest that he could not understand the official Communist poets: "I prefer to read Pushkin," he said. Besides, Pushkin expresses the whole of Russia, not merely its gloom and

[3]Untranslatable Russian word suggesting quickness of psychic apprehension.

tragedy (though he does express these) but also its light-heartedness and its grace, its natural beauty and its quaint folk-lore, the Russia of the ballet and the song, the Russia of Pavlova and Rimsky-Korsakoff as well as the Russia of Tschaikovsky and Dostoyevsky, the Russia of the artist as well as the Russia of the psychologist. Whatever the real explanation, the popularity in Russia of a poet in whose best work there is not a trace of propaganda, political, social, or moral, is a sublime slap in the face to the doctrine that "all art is propaganda."

The preceding will, I hope, have given some rough idea of Pushkin's general location on the literary and cultural map of Europe. Is it possible to bring the reader who has no Russian into closer contact with him? Some idea, from a classificatory point of view, of his literary productions can at least be given and may have a practical utility. In the "Slovo" edition, which I use, Pushkin's works in verse and prose fill six volumes of above five hundred pages each. A volume and a third is given to his miscellaneous lyrics (elegies, odes, epigrams, ballads, songs, sonnets, *etc.*), remarkable for the variety not only of form and metre, but of subject-matter and mood. The Slavic versatility, the "Protean" quality of Pushkin's mind, is perhaps most easily studied here, as we range from the playful fancy of *The Cloud* (interesting to compare or contrast with Shelley's poem of the same name)—through the folk-lore weirdness of *The Devils* or *The Drowned Man*, the nature-description of *Autumn* and *A Winter Morning* (always objective in Pushkin, never mystical or rhapsodic), the elegiac grace of the numerous love-poems, such as the exquisite *I Loved You* (often compared to a Greek epigram for its restrained emotion and perfection of form) or the equally consummate *For the Shores of your Distant Home*, the martial vigour of *The*

Feast of Peter the Great, the grim terseness of *The Upas-Tree*, the spiritual anguish of *Remembrance*, the majesty of the *Ode to Napoleon*—on to the Biblical sublimity of *The Prophet*. The remainder of the second volume and all the third contain Pushkin's longer poems (narrative and dramatic). Among the most notable of the narrative poems are *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (a fantasy in the manner of Ariosto and Wieland), *The Captive of the Caucasus*, *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*, *The Gypsies* (these three under the influence of Byron's Oriental tales, but based on Pushkin's own observations in the Caucasus, the Crimea, and Bessarabia respectively, and more illustrative of Mérimée's characterization of Pushkin as an "Athénien captif parmi les Scythes" than any other of his works), *Poltava* (the story of Mazeppa's revolt outlined against the background of the struggle between Peter and Charles of Sweden, the most epic thing that Pushkin wrote, and famous for the great battle-piece), *The Bronze Horseman* (perhaps, taken all in all, Pushkin's masterpiece, a poem of Tacitean terseness, a singular blend of the homely and the epic, and capable of symbolic interpretation), the so-called *Skazki* (five "folk"- or "fairy-tales," as airy and ballet-like as *The Bronze Horseman* is firm and metallic, and equally masterly in their kind),[4] and, most important of all, Pushkin's *magnum opus* and his richest and most human work if not his masterpiece, the novel in verse, *Yevgeni Oniegin*. One of the main obstacles to English appreciation of Pushkin's place in the history of Russian fiction has been the lack of an adequate translation of this unique work, unparalleled in any other literature, the first (and, according to some Russian critics, still the

[4]Two of them, *Tsar Saltan* and *The Golden Cockerel*, served as the basis for Rimsky-Korsakoff's well-known operas just as *Ruslan and Ludmilla* suggested Glinka's opera of the same name.

greatest) of Russian realistic novels, in which, however, descriptive and psychological realism of the most modern kind lives on equal terms with the beauty of "pure poetry." An analogy might be sought in some other art (in the paintings of Vermeer or Chardin, for example), but the so-called novels in verse of other literatures, like *Jocelyn* or *Hermann und Dorothea* or *Enoch Arden*, are not helpful, for in all of them the balance is constantly tipping either on the side of realism or of poetry, whereas in Pushkin's work the fusion (incredible as it seems) is maintained throughout. In subject-matter the poem is a panorama of life in Russia a hundred years ago, not only in St. Petersburg or Moscow but also on the old "pomieschiya" or country-estates. Most of these narrative poems are composed in octosyllabic couplets, but *Yevgeni Oniegin* is in an elaborate stanza form.

The dramatic works of Pushkin consist of the historical tragedy or chronicle-play, *Boris Godunov*, and of a series of "Little Dramas." Pushkin regarded *Boris Godunov* as his masterpiece, but posterity has not agreed with him. It has been cast into the shade by Moussorgsky's great opera of the same name, partly suggested by Pushkin's drama. It is most undramatic in structure, being a series of numerous scenes, some in verse, some in prose; the prose scenes presenting the Russian populace with Shakespearean realism in characterization and diction, are the best; the verse-scenes are rather stiff and written in a wooden kind of blank verse. The "Little Dramas," on the other hand, are among Pushkin's most highly-prized works. The longest does not exceed forty pages, the shortest covers less than ten. They are not acting-dramas, but simply dramatic projections of psychological situations, with strict omission of everything irrelevant. They, like *Yevgeni Oniegin*, are unique in literature; three

of them, at least, *Mozart and Salieri*, *The Covetous Knight*, and *The Stone Guest*,[5] by their penetrating psychology, their vivid characterization, their masterly irony, their economy of construction and expression, and their supple and graceful blank verse, are close runners-up of *The Bronze Horseman* for first place among Pushkin's masterpieces.

We do not think so readily of Pushkin as a prose-writer, yet it will be noted that half of the "Slovo" edition is devoted to his prose, and, in fact, he plays a rôle in the foundation of modern Russian prose only second to his part in the foundation of Russian poetry. Many of his projected works in prose remained torsos; some, like the *History of Peter the Great*, never issued from the womb of thought. One great historical work, *The History of Pugachov's Rebellion*, he completed. His best-known prose-works, however, are his short stories,[6] especially *The Queen of Spades* and *The Captain's Daughter*, the first of which always appears in anthologies of Russian *contes*. Neither much suggests the short story of Tchekhov or Gorky. *The Queen of Spades* might have been written by Hoffmann or Poe, while *The Captain's Daughter* is an offshoot of Sir Walter Scott's influence. In all of these works, Pushkin's prose is as classical as his verse, clear, sober, elegant, an obvious product of the study of Voltaire and other French *prosateurs* of the eighteenth century.

All that remains is for me to correct the somewhat one-sided image which I may have built up in the reader's

[5]A translation of *Mozart and Salieri* by the author of this article first appeared in the QUARTERLY (vol. II, pp. 482-91). It is reprinted with his translations of the other two works in the new volume of Pushkin published by Random House (see footnote 1).—[EDITOR'S NOTE]

[6]Some of Pushkin's stories are to be found translated into English in a volume of the Everyman series.

mind by insisting at the outset on Pushkin's classicism. It must never be forgotten that, though he is an "Athénien," he is also "captif parmi les Scythes." If we neglect either of these contraries, we miss the peculiar *ethos* of Pushkin. He is anything but a "perruque;" a comparison with Chénier rather than with Boileau would indicate best what shade of classicism was his. But even this analogy would be misleading. Pushkin is the product of a race still close to the primitive; nor must we forget that, through one of his great-grandfathers, he had Abyssinian blood in his veins. It is significant of Pushkin's deeper nature that he was proud of this African strain in him, which he adduced as an explanation of his notorious sensuality (a quality which he openly expresses in much of his poetry that has never been published). He is fond of strong, passionate characters, of violent, cruel situations, and, like Stendhal, of "the psychological picturesque." No modern writer is more imbued with what Unamuno calls "the tragic sense of life," the ineluctability of fate. In this respect he recalls the great Greeks rather than the French classicists. Moreover—though I have stressed the general normality of his work—he undoubtedly anticipates the later Russians by his occasional (and profound) plunges into the dark mysteries of the subconscious (and it is characteristic of his "Proteism" that these plunges are as likely to occur at unexpected moments in a frivolous short *conte* like *The Little House in Kolomna* as in one of his tragic tales). The quality in which his Greek classicalness and his French classicalness best unite is his irony—more pervasive perhaps than that of any other writer—which ranges from the playful drawing-room variety of *Count Nulin* to the nemesis of *Yevgeni Oniegin* and of the "Little Dramas."

If we seek analogies with Pushkin in other literatures, we shall find no one with his surprising variety of aspect. In his lighter, more worldly moods, he reminds us of La Fontaine (one feels that only Pushkin or La Fontaine could have written *The Little House in Kolomna* or *Count Nulin*); in his passionate moments he recalls the intense colourless flame of Racine; in the comprehension of all varieties of character he approaches Shakespeare (Dostoyevsky called him "pan-anthropos"); in his ballads and folk-lyrics he is the equal of Bürger and Schiller; in his grave, reflective moments he is often comparable to Goethe, with less self-consciousness and also, perhaps, rather less "high seriousness;" in his narrative skill he is the modern Ariosto; in occasional ventures into the weird and the sub-conscious he suggests William Blake. He has nothing of the mystical nature-worship of Wordsworth, nothing of the cosmic mind of Coleridge, nothing of the ethereal otherworldliness of Shelley, nothing of Keats's

> magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.

Even when dealing with the most "romantic" of subject-matter, he is always precise, sharp of contour, light of wing, utterly without *emphase* or attitudinizing.

His nearest soul-mate in the world of art is to be sought, not in literature, but in music. Many Pushkin scholars have long recognized in the Mozart of *Mozart and Salieri* a deliberate self-portrait. Only we must be careful to remember that the Mozart who is to be equated with Pushkin must be the whole Mozart, not merely the fashionable drawing-room Mozart of the elegant minuets and the formally beautiful concertos (though that Mozart must not be excluded either) but also the Mozart of the last scene of *Don Giovanni*, of the G Minor Quintet and

of *The Requiem*. In both we recognize the same consummate craftsmanship, the same divine ease and lightness of touch even when dealing with the gravest of subjects, the same champagne-like vivacity and sparkle (the style of the *Skazki* is like Mozart's whirlwind *finales* transmuted into language), the same pervasive irony, the same gentlemanly reserve in the expression of emotion, the same occasional throwing off of this reserve (as in the dreadful poem *God Grant I May Not Go Mad* and in parts of *The Requiem*), the same unique blend of human interest and "pure art." Pushkin is the Mozart of literature. He was perhaps less favoured by fortune than his prototype in only one particular: he did not speak so universal a language.

THE THOUGHT OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

M. M. Kirkwood

In an article which appeared in the *London Mercury* of January, 1933, G. K. Chesterton placed Huxley among the young moderns whom he attacked as "witty, brilliant and fashionable bankrupts." This view of Huxley in particular has been a common one, for brilliance and wit animate whatever he writes, and, having written for a world that wanted to be amused, he has become fashionable. Mr. Chesterton understood him merely to mock, as one having no religious belief and seeing no purpose in the world or in the will. Whether this be a real aspect of his work or not, readers have not found it easy to resist a writer who remarks in connection with one of his characters that "no chameleon can live with comfort on a tartan," and who concludes his description of his own agonies during a first ride on an elephant with the comment, "I returned full of admiration for Hannibal. He crossed the Alps on an elephant." Numerous quips by Huxley include the statement that "Puritans like to wear the fig-leaf over the mouth," while in a serious essay on the evolution of theologies, he uses the astonishing figure, "Men's religious life works on the principle of a hot-water system." Huxley's vocabulary is no less entertaining than his figures of comparison, and we find ourselves stimulated if not always illuminated by "minusculous" and "callipygous," "wamblingly" and "bombinating," "geodesic" and "mixolydian." It is as if the creator of "brillig" and "slithy toves" had come to life again, challenging us to understand as well as to enjoy him.

Entertainment has, however, been the most frequent aim for readers of Huxley, who have gone to the novels

for the flavour and veritable appearance of contemporary existence. In these, with the exception of the last, *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), it is common to notice chiefly the verbal scintillation, the acute observation, and the high spirits combined with devastating pessimism. For those readers, on the other hand, who know the poems, and the essays (*On the Margin*, 1923, *Jesting Pilate*, 1926, *Do What You Will*, 1929, and *Music at Night*, 1931), the keenest pleasure in reading Huxley has been derived from recognizing the critical acumen behind the jest, the wisdom beneath the wit. He is not only an artist absorbed in his work, but (in spite of his animadversions against his maternal grandfather) a thinker whose whole work is marked by high seriousness. For half a generation his verbal fireworks have distracted attention from this fact; but in his last novel he drops his pyrotechnics in face of the blaze of unity covering separation ("Unity of mankind, unity of all life, all being even," he writes), and speaks plainly to the reader. In spite of our interest in this exposition of a new mysticism based on science, we are a little shocked—as who might say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" And yet, as early as in *Little Mexican* (1924), Huxley himself said, "Now it is possible—it is, indeed, almost necessary—for a man of science to be also a mystic."

It is characteristic, then, that Huxley should describe Anthony Beavis, in *Eyeless in Gaza*, as converted to the mystic theory elaborated in the last pages of that novel, by the observations of an anthropologist. The marvels of scientific fact, particularly of biological fact, fascinate this grandchild of Darwin's bull-dog. There are innumerable passages in his work to remind the reader of his scientific heritage. In *Mortal Coils* (1922), he makes the old boy of *The Tillotson Banquet* say, "Life to come.

. . . No, I don't believe in any of that stuff—not since 1859. *The Origin of Species* changed my views, you know. No life to come for me, thank you. You don't remember the excitement of course. You're very young, Mr. Spode." Many readers will remember striking passages in *Point Counter Point* (1928), where Huxley's accounts of chemical and physical change are shown in ironic juxtaposition to the observed mental and emotional experience of his characters, while others will have noted in *Eyeless in Gaza* the extraordinary description of the fertilization of the cell as seen under the microscope. Not so many readers know the poetic transcription of life's chemistry (or "The Cycle of Nutriment in the Natural World" as it might be called), which is found in *The Cicadas* (1931), or the following passage from *Little Mexican:*

> What an itch we have to know whether Mr. Smith makes love to his secretary. And meanwhile the most incredible miracles are happening all round us: stones, when we lift them and let them go, fall to the ground; the sun shines; bees visit the flowers; seeds grow into plants; a cell in nine months multiplies its weight a few thousands of thousands of times, and is a child; and men think, creating the world they live in. These things leave us almost perfectly indifferent.

Repetitive, impassioned, and unconcerned, Huxley has thus for years poured his energy into bringing the incredible miracles of physics, chemistry, biology, and other sciences before his reader's eyes. But admiration is not his only motive, nor enlightenment his only aim. He wishes to say, "These things you should see. These things you should know. But you cannot know all. There is no knowledge in the absolute sense. Man's only wisdom is an open mind." In other words, his first philosophic purpose is to teach scepticism, just as clearly

as his first aesthetic purpose is to express love of existence. We find, for example, in the collection of essays *Along the Road* (1928), the statement: "We have learned that nothing is simple and rational except what we ourselves have invented, . . . that science has 'explained' nothing." He writes in *Proper Studies* (1927), "Where knowledge is absent—and in an absolute sense we can know nothing—a vague working hypothesis is quite enough for all practical and even philosophical purposes." And in *Do What You Will* (1929), there is the clear pronouncement about science, that it "tells us nothing about the real nature of the world." These statements, which indeed represent a basic element in his thought, form the chief ground for the critic who sees in Aldous Huxley a mental and moral bankrupt. Science has led him to wonder at the world, but has convinced him that it cannot be understood. He is in other words a true child of Hume, a thoroughgoing rationalist and sceptic. The interesting question is whether his thought may not contain some stress or substance which carries him beyond Hume—although Chesterton would have said that he went beyond Hume only in negativeness and iconoclasm.

Certainly Huxley's use of natural science, and of psychology in particular, tends to disillusionment in the casual reader. Little else could be expected from a writer who says frankly (in *Do What You Will*), "Truth is internal. One psychological fact is as good as another." In his imaginative work, and in his essays, Huxley acts in accordance with this psychological indifferentism, and the results, if sometimes repellent to the taste, do open vistas of actuality before the reader which render untenable for the future the false and blind idealism loosely held by many. Huxley has, for example, brought home to some romantic people the perception that "What we

think and feel is to a great extent determined by the state of our ductless glands and our viscera" (his own words from *Music at Night*), a perception amply illustrated throughout his novels. He has also treated the natural, the physical, and the material as existing with rights of their own, and has refused to deprecate them as the ascetic interpreter of Christianity might do. Nothing repels him so deeply as the "Swift disease" with its false spiritualities and disgusts, and he constantly suggests the ideal of a whole and natural life, praising Homer, and Chaucer, as accepting and understanding human experience for what it is. "There is no tragedy in Homer," he writes in *Brief Candles* (1930). "Homer lived before the split; life hadn't been broken when he wrote."

Huxley conceives himself, therefore, as permeating with his imagination the full data of human experience, more completely known in this age than ever before, and giving them out in a form to awaken and move his reader to fuller consciousness and deeper thought. We know that he cherishes this hope of his own work; for in *Eyeless in Gaza*, when Mark Staithes attacks the untruthfulness of imaginative literature (which leaves out, he declares, all the perversions and absurdities and obsessions and unavoidable cravings of human beings in favour of their organized and recognized sentiments), Anthony is made to record in his diary:

> Agreed with Mark that imaginative literature wasn't doing its duty. That it was essential to know everything—and to know it, not merely through scientific text-books, but also in a form that would have power to bring the facts home to the whole mind, not merely to the intellect. A complete expression (in terms of imaginative literature) leading to complete knowledge (with the whole mind) of the complete truth.

Here Huxley becomes his own apologist against those who regard him as a mere muck-raker, or even a mere ironist. He has the ironic gift of seeing life on two levels, it is true, but the sensual and natural are far from being his main pre-occupation, as certain commentators have suggested. He is often fiercely frank lest he and the readers may let themselves off too easily, and leave the picture of themselves and their world more pleasant than the facts warrant. But when the picture is complete and devastating, what then? Again in his last book, and in the paragraph already quoted from, Huxley is quite explicit about his ultimate aim. The imaginative treatment of life in its present actuality is the

> indispensable preliminary condition of any remedial action, any serious attempt at the construction of a genuinely human being. Construction from within by training in proper use of the self—training, simultaneously physical and mental. Construction, at the same time, from without, by means of social and economic arrangements devised in the light of a complete knowledge of the individual, and of the way in which the individual can modify himself.

These words point sharply the hilarious irony of his *Brave New World* (1932), and must close once for all the lips of his accusers.

For the Huxley of 1936 is confessedly an ethical philosopher, interested in the ethics of society as well as of the individual. Both trends have been evident in his work for some years. A rationalist, he starts his considerations by recognizing that right and wrong are a matter of the age and time concerned. "Morality is the theory of pre-existing social habits," he writes in *Jesting Pilate*. "Civilization is nothing but a series of conventions." He realizes that the earliest conventions have been determined by the struggle for survival, and that

for long periods society has been the real, and the individual only a potential, unit. Because the present European world is a post-war world, it tends to Fascism and supernationalism, which means that the type of individual cultivated by authority is moulded chiefly with reference to national survival. This contradicts, for Huxley, the whole point and meaning of civilization, which means to him the high humane values represented in the lives of the individuals making up that civilization. We get our values from the past, it is true, but liberty itself is one of those values and should be cherished, while a too rigid holding by the past should be resisted. So morality means first a balancing of the claims of society and individual. Huxley believes that no acute dilemma will be felt as long as attention is focussed on concrete people. For in this way, as he writes in *Eyeless in Gaza*,

> you see at once that freedom from coercion is a necessary condition of their developing into full-grown human beings; that the form of economic prosperity which consists in possessing unnecessary objects doesn't make for individual well-being; that a leisure filled with passive amusements is not a blessing; that the conveniences of urban life are bought at a high physiological and mental price; that an education which allows you to use yourself wrongly is almost valueless; that a social organization resulting in individuals being forced, every few years, to go out and murder one another must be wrong. And so on.

To this quotation might be added numerous other comments on the political problems of our time. Huxley's radical sympathies do not blind him to the folly of a too confident democracy, nor do his aristocratic tastes and training prevent him from just consideration for the rights of all men. After visiting India, he wrote in *Jesting Pilate*, "One is all for religion until one visits a really religious country. There, one is all for drains, machinery and the minimum wage." The following year (1927) he

wrote in *Proper Studies*, "That every human being should be in his place—this is the ideal of the aristocratic as opposed to the democratic state," a saying pregnant with wisdom if hardly original!

It is when he writes of the individual human being, his drives and impulses, his propensity to thought and capacity for contemplation, his conflicts, his duty and happiness, that Huxley is most illuminating. He is well aware that his naturalism may be mis-read, and so makes himself very clear as to the end of the whole matter. Man is not just the creature of his physical impulses, not just the victim of arbitrary conditioning, not just the passive spectator in an alien world, but a conscious, creative, discriminating being who not only feels and enjoys but "thinks, creating the world he lives in," experiences the categorical imperative (a phrase he jests at, it is true), judges, and makes and applies ever new standards and values. In *On the Margin* there is an interesting passage:

> Everything that Wren did was the work of a gentleman: one who valued dignity and restraint and who, respecting himself, respected also humanity; one who desired that men and women should live with the dignity, even the grandeur befitting their proud human title; one who despised meanness and oddity as much as vulgar ostentation; one who admired reason and order, who distrusted all extravagance and excess.

And a little further on: "For practical purposes and in a civilized, orderly society, the gentleman remains, after all, the ideal man." These extracts should be read in conjunction with his discussions as to the ends of life, which are carried on in *Jesting Pilate*. He there writes, "Man is here on earth to adventure, to know, to try all things, to advance (if only for the fun of advancing, of not standing still) towards some quite unattainable goal

of perfection;" and he speaks of the values of "intelligence, independence and disinterested activity" as the most precious things in life. For those questioning the right of one professing rationalism and naturalism to take up such a position, he answers, "Our belief that things possess value is due to an immediate sense or intention; we feel, and feeling we know, that things have value." One is reminded in this connection of a remark in an essay of his on *Democratic Art.* "The democratically minded will ask what right we have to say that the *Mass in D* is better than the works of Julia Ward Howe. . . . They will insist that there is no hierarchy at all. It is not altogether easy to answer these objections. . . . The best one can do is to point out that, in a sense, one contains the other." Huxley in effect throws up his hands: "Humanity is a miracle, making its own values, and to be judged only by humane standards." So in *Music at Night* he writes of the value of beauty. "The last act of *Don Giovanni* is not deducible from electrons, or molecules, or even from cells and entire organs. In relation to these physical, chemical and biological worlds it is simply a *non sequitur.* . . . The constellated worlds are all situated in the heaven of the human mind."

Much more might be written of Huxley's humanism, of his development through scientific scepticism to a mysticism based on the unity in diversity present in nature and in human experience, of his literary affinities, on the one hand with Lawrence in his cult of the physical body and the spontaneous, and on the other with Proust in his exquisite reflection of the complexities of man's conscious life, on his kinship to Socrates and Swift—but all these may be found plainly written in his work. What should be emphasized finally is that which seems most characteristic and original in Huxley, which is in effect

all-pervasive and a most necessary message for his age. This is the clear recognition of man's full responsibility for his life, which has come to Huxley as the human and ethical implication of the scientific discoveries of the last three generations. Rampion is made Huxley's mouthpiece in *Point Counter Point*: "A man is a creature on a tight rope. . . . The only absolute he can ever know is the absolute of perfect balance." Miller, in *Eyeless in Gaza*, is also made to say: "Not that anything ever happens by chance, of course. One takes the card the conjurer forces on one—the card which one has oneself made it inevitable that he should force on one. It's a matter of cause and effect." These are but the logical development of earlier *dicta* found in *Do What You Will*. "The only thing in our power is to do our best to be men, here and now," he wrote. "The purpose of life . . . is the purpose we put into it." And so Huxley leaves us, having robbed us of the overruling benevolence of God and the machinations of fate, and having put on us the task of building and ever re-building the religion, the very God, by which we may be able to live.

FROM HUMAN TO HUMANE IN THE MODERN FRENCH NOVEL*

FELIX WALTER

> Tout livre où il n'est pas parlé du pauvre, où on ne tient pas compte du pauvre, est un livre à cracher dessus.
>
> LÉON BLOY.

WITHIN the past few months the French political world has emerged from the confusion and hesitation of the period since the War. New men wedded to new doctrines govern in Paris. It is not the purpose of this article to comment on the *Front Populaire*, its aims or the men who shape them. But it seems to the present writer possible to draw a parallel between recent tendencies in the sphere of French letters and similar ones in the domain of French politics, possible as well to indicate the general direction and significance of the former. And it is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that such a rough chart may be of some help to those who have found the post-War French novel with its innumerable "isms" as chaotic as French politics with its multiplicity of parties.

As a matter of fact, the literatures of every Western nation have seemed adrift and directionless during the last fifteen years, and even the professional critics whose function it is to chart currents and trace patterns, often when none exists, have at times seemed to assume a wisdom which had little foundation. For centuries it has been profitable at all such moments of aesthetic chaos to turn to France. Not that French art-forms or French modes of thought tend towards simplicity—it would be truer to

*The writer has supplied at the end, a selected list of novels and critical manifestos *additional* to those mentioned in the body of the article.—[EDITOR'S NOTE]

state the contrary—but the French dislike for "messes," the tendency for French authors to work in groups with a common aim, the French habit of thinking in terms of movements rather than of individual eccentricities, get the critic half way out of the wood before he has started. And it is not just coincidence that tendencies which are beginning to be apparent in France to-day, turn up somewhere else to-morrow or the day after. That has happened again and again in the past.

Of course, the new tendencies in French literature are not confined to the novel, but there are reasons for limiting this investigation to that special field. Ever since the days of Balzac the novel has attracted all the more robust creative intelligences of France. At the same time it has been the best barometer of change in form or content. The theatre lags by comparison. The playwright's dependence on a more conservative public, not to speak of the exigencies of the box-office, keeps him in the rearguard of literary expression. Besides, it would be idle to pretend that the post-War theatre in France has been either as rich or as varied as the novel of the same period, and this in spite of notable contributions. The poets, it is true, have been singularly prolific, but their art is still largely esoteric, lingering under the last incubus of symbolism; that is to say, not up-to-date, not in the main stream as the novel is. For all these reasons, then, the novel, and the polemical literature which has grown up around it, has been chosen as the best key to present-day tendencies in French literature.

That brings us back to a consideration of what those tendencies are, and to the rather truculent text at the head of this article. Here again the political parallel may be of some help as a starting-point. Last May a comfortable majority of Frenchmen decided in favour of

vaguely collectivist solutions of current problems. On the whole, the interests of the less privileged classes, what is generally referred to as the *peuple*, were to be preferred to those of the by now symbolic "two hundred families." Of course, this is putting a complex political question in its very simplest terms. Translated into the world of the novelist, it is the steady drift, discernible during the last few years, away from what has come to be called in France *la littérature snob* and towards a sympathetic preoccupation with the unheroic lives of humbler folk—*les petites gens*. Many nineteenth-century novelists, Paul Bourget among them, really believed that only gentlemen were worth writing about, because only gentlemen led sufficiently complicated lives and, presumably, thought sufficiently complicated thoughts. Now the boot is on the other foot. "We are in revolt against the novel of the 16th arrondissement, which is dying in any case," say the Populists in their manifesto of 1929. And for Passy and its elegances they substitute the back-streets of Ménilmontant or the factories and "garden" suburbs of the industrial zone.

The new current has not only led to the formation of new schools of the novel—Populists Proletarians, and half-a-dozen others—but has swept a disparate collection of distinguished individuals along with it. André Gide has left his doctrinaire Protestantism and his inversions, his ultra-individualism, André Malraux his early surrealist posturings and his anarchism, to adhere to the new doctrine. André Thérive stops quarrelling about fine points of grammar in the columns of the *Temps* to chronicle the loves of a non-commissioned officer's wife (*Anna*), while his colleague, Léon Lemonnier, deserts the academic study of Poe and Baudelaire to document himself on the life-tragedies of a concierge (*Coeur imbécile*).

A striking feature of the new movement is its healthy contempt for stylistic acrobatics, and in this the change from the early nineteen-twenties is very great. Then, all the talk was of three dimensional narrative, stream of consciousness, automatism, Proustism, and the like. What was ultimately usable in all these experimental techniques has now been sifted out and salvaged. But mere fine writing is with the novelists of the new movement no longer an end in itself. M. Jacques Maritain summed up the pendulum-swing in a recent article in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* when, speaking of Gide's "conversion" to Communism and similar political symptoms in the world of letters, he said that all "showed the present primacy of the social factor and the flight from purely artistic consideration before the cares and anxieties of the present moment." The tendency is so sweeping that it affects novelists whose political views are very different from those of Gide. A Mauriac or a Green, as M. Maritain points out, are now "all preoccupied with moral rather than with poetic considerations."

Again, the new movement, through some if not all of its adherents, stresses the notion of class. Not because French novelists have suddenly swallowed Marx, but because within the last two generations French peasants and French artisans have taken to writing their own novels. No one has put the new feeling more succinctly than Charles-Louis Philippe, the chief novelist of the *naturiste* group. "I have a feeling of class," he wrote on one occasion. "The writers who have preceded me all sprang from the middle class. I am not interested in the same things as they are. All the moral crises of their literature are moral crises of the middle class. Musset in his *Rolla* thinks of life as one continuous dissipation. I am forced to think more about people who work and about my daily

bread. When Barrès wants to find his soul he has to go off to Venice or Toledo. I can find mine in the people around me."

But Charles-Louis Philippe and Léon Bloy, the peppery Catholic novelist who supplied the text for this article, both belong to the end of the last century. How is it that their writings can be quoted so aptly to give the feeling of a direction in the French novel which scarcely became sensible before 1927? The answer is that the movement is new only in a sense; it is new to this generation. Historically it is an old movement refurbished. Just as M. Léon Blum and his colleagues of the present government take up the tradition of French Socialism, the tradition of Jaurès and of Guesde, which was interrupted by the War and by the pistol-shot which echoed in the Café du Croissant twenty-four hours before war was declared, so what one may call the new humanization of the French novel, and with the novel of all French literature, was the goal of a whole generation from 1895 to 1914. The same imperative event snapped the thread which has only now been reknit.

All contemporary French history goes back to the *Affaire Dreyfus*. It was the great emotional storm in which so many Frenchmen of the day discovered for the first time where their political and human affinities really lay. Chronologically the *Affaire* coincided with the first real *rapprochement* between intellectuals and manual workers, while the years immediately following witnessed the birth of a whole host of organizations destined to bridge the gulf. There were the *universités populaires*, of which our own W.E.A. is a cousin at most once removed, Marc Sagnier's Christian-Democratic movement *Le Sillon*, later to be condemned by the Vatican as too "advanced," and the *Union pour l'Action Morale*, an early

attempt at grouping "men of good will." Charles Péguy, one of the idols of his generation, was dreaming of the *cité harmonieuse* and trying to hammer out a Socialism freed of the more unpleasant exigencies of politics. Free and compulsory education began at the same time to produce the first crop of novelists, poets, and playwrights sprung from the working class itself. Louis Nazzi, Lucien Jean, Marguerite Audoux, and Pierre Hamp are not names of the first rank perhaps, but they are the direct spiritual ancestors of Dabit, or Guilloux, or Prévost, or Rémy today. The vogue for Russian literature brought the novels of Dostoyevsky and of Tolstoy into the hands of French readers and with them an appreciation of the fact that realism and the psychological novel need not necessarily be inhuman or even unhuman. Paul Bourget, his twenty pairs of shoes and his aristocratic heroes and heroines, flayed by deft flicks of the anatomist's scalpel, seemed suddenly to recede into a quaint and unfashionable past. The new idols were Claudel with his utterly simple vocabulary, Jehan Rictus reciting his *Soliloques du Pauvre* at the Quat'zarts, Romain Rolland and his historical dramas of the Revolution, the last-named revived, significantly enough, for popular rejoicings this past summer.

The War smashed this sympathetic current running strongly towards a new France and a new French literature, as it smashed so many other things. But even the meagre literature of the War years, even that very special genre, the War novel, show traces of the new orientation. It is striking when one compares French with, say, English novels of the War to notice that while the latter are written mainly by officers and about officers with the "tommy" introduced for an occasional lighter moment (Mottram, Graves, Sassoon, and others), the French War novel from Barbusse's *Le Feu* onwards (Drieu

La Rochelle, Dorgelès, Guehenno, *etc.*) is almost without exception pre-occupied with the common soldier. Characteristically enough, André Maurois's well-known *Silences du Colonel Bramble*, and its no less amusing sequel, are from the pen of a Frenchman who served as a liaison officer with the British Army and they have for their characters Englishmen not Frenchmen.

It is in the immediate post-War period that the most patient explorer loses all trace of the movement that had begun to make itself felt before the cataclysm. The political France of Versailles, the Ruhr, and Monsieur Poincaré, finds its sombre counterpart in a romantic literature which makes the *frénétique* of a century ago seem singularily tame and humdrum. Like all romantic literature it is a literature of escape, but so fevered and impatient that only the *wagon-lit* express train, or better still the passenger 'plane, are fast enough to shuttle the bored heroes and heroines of Maurice Dekobra or Paul Morand from one end of Europe to the other. Even Europe is not big enough, and off across the ocean in all directions go the characters of the scores of exotic novels that pullulate in the early nineteen-twenties. They go to tease bulls in a ring in Spain with M. Henry de Montherlant (the French Hemingway), or to listen to tom-toms in the African jungle with M. René Maran, whose *Batouala* brought the *Prix Goncourt* to the lowest point it has ever reached. But this exoticism has the same picture-postcard feel about it that all romantic exoticism possesses. M. Maurice Bedel's Norway, M. Jean-Richard Bloch's Syria are strangely reminiscent of the American forests of Chateaubriand with flamingoes darting in and out among the trees and *carcajous* hanging by their tails from the brink of Niagara Falls. One thinks of Musset's Italy, of Hugo's Antilles. But the whole round world is never

refuge enough for the escapist, and he flees to others beyond: the world of the drug-addict in the early novels of Drieu La Rochelle and Cocteau, or the highly-spiced half-world of Francis Carco and a dozen others. So that not only do the early nineteen-twenties witness a revived Romanticism, but, telescoped into it, a second *fin-de-siècle* decadence.

Another plague of the period is the unhappy survival of great reputations grown somewhat dusty with time. It was not the fault of Anatole France, of Maurice Barrès, or of Paul Bourget that they lived on after the War and, as venerable idols under glass, came to be worshipped by all the official critics and held up as models to a new generation with totally different aims and a totally different background. The result was to spawn a whole brood of imitations, caricatures in microcosm. It was a painful spectacle, but again how closely paralleling the situation in the political field where the men who ruled France were Briand, Clemenceau, Barthou, Poincaré, leaders who had made their mark at the same remote period as their contemporaries the elder novelists mentioned above. It is no wonder that the defiant slogan of the hour was "*A bas les barbes*!"—"Down with the graybeards!" If a chaotic romanticism was the prime curse of the post-War novel in France, I think it can be said that gerontocracy was a close second. And how onerous this mortmain of the aged seemed to the younger generation was shown by the spontaneous and somewhat unpleasant repudiation of Anatole France immediately after his death in 1924. It was Anatole France the representative of an epoch rather than the great author of twenty works of genius who bore the brunt of the attack, though perhaps the suspected cynicism of the creator of Monsieur Bergeret had some-

thing to do with it; cynicism was to go sharply out of fashion very shortly.

It must not be imagined that the post-War novel in France was utterly futile. Its creators were men and women of delicate and nervous sensibility, imaginative, original, and singularly audacious and competent in technique. Nobody could or can write more delightfully about almost nothing at all than M. Jean Giraudoux. Nobody can weave a more glamorous if somewhat repetitive pattern about the Catholic sense of sin than M. François Mauriac. Nobody can construct a better monster than M. Julian Green. And all these came into prominence ten or a dozen years ago. They are by no means the only novelists of distinction in the period. But there is a lack of drive and direction about so many of them, a *blasé* callousness, a desire to *épater*, a general invalid fragility, which renders so much of their work more than usually ephemeral. The amazing technique remains and the more robust literature which was to follow is more indebted to conquests already made in that field than its practitioners are usually ready to admit.

As technique is the monument of the period, it would be well to mention the most outstanding group of writers who after Proust and his followers made the most signal contribution in this field—the Surrealists. The school and its adherents have suffered from a good deal of incomprehension, and indeed still do if one is to judge from some of the critical comments on the Surrealist Exhibition which crossed the Channel to Burlington House last summer. They are always difficult, it is true, and often perversely so, but the desire to escape through language from the conventions of language is a legitimate aim of literature and is at the root of all pure poetry. *Jabberwocky* is good Surrealism and so is much of Blake, to take

examples from another land and another age. But the chief significance of the Surrealist movement round about 1925, as far as this discussion is concerned, lies in the fact that it was a movement with a common programme and that programme revolutionary in character. The Surrealists protested in the name of a higher reality against conventionality and stock patterns. Some of the more obstreperous members of the group even translated their literary opinions into direct action and manifested noisily at the performances of more than usually insipid plays. Such conduct would seem alarming in an Anglo-Saxon world, but in France it can indicate a return of vitality. Since the first performance of *Hernani* and the *premières* of the early Wagner operas, there had been comparatively few heads broken in the name of Art. It meant in this case that forces were at work below the surface.

One of these forces, paralleling the Surrealist movement in time, was the tug of the Russian magnet. French writers on the whole were late in making what to Englishmen, Americans, and Germans had already become the fashionable pilgrimage to Moscow. But one by one they went; first Barbusse, then Duhamel, and later many others. They came back with a picture which conflicted sharply with the official bed-time stories, and with disturbing phrases about "proletarian art," "the decay of the bourgeois novel," and the like. They began, too, as novelists, to flirt with various left-wing political movements, in other words to build again that bridge between poetry and action which Péguy and his generation had essayed. This proved alarming to some of the marooned egotists who dominated the literature of the day. And one can recapture something of this disquiet by rereading Julien Benda's *La Trahison des clercs*. The "clerks" were the learned men and artists of every kind; their "treason"

was their descent into the political arena. The debate is remote and there is no need to go all over it again. Ably as Benda's thesis was argued, it was as ably answered by Berl, Guehenno, and others who were quick to point out that some of the greatest "clerks" (Plato, Milton, Spinoza) have not shirked the arena, while others who "stuck to their knitting" did so as much from cowardice as from singlemindedness.

In any case the new treason continued to spread. And an increasing number of French novelists were influenced not only by Russian slogans but even more so by the works of new contemporaries from the east and north. They read Gorki and the novels of the Roumanian, Panaït Istrati. They read Johan Bojer and Knut Hamsun. And all these came in time to perform much the same function that Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy had performed among French novelists of an earlier generation—a humanizing function. Pity, simple folk, the disinherited came into vogue again. These foreign novelists in translation did what a Dickens might have done, if it were possible to imagine a modern Dickens with the saccharine content almost entirely distilled away.

It was not really necessary to go twenty or thirty degrees east of the Paris meridian to find this new leaven. Much of it could have been exhumed in writers of the Charles-Louis Philippe type. Actually much of it was rediscovered in Philippe's great predecessor, Zola. The story of the return of Zola from the very remote circle of Hades into which he had been cast by Brunetière, Doumic, and the other official critics at the turn of the century, is a very curious and significant one. Naturalism was supposed to be completely discredited along with its originator. Paul Alexis's telegram, "Naturalism not dead, letter follows," was reproduced with relish in all the man-

uals as a supreme example of *naïveté*. But Alexis was right and not the critics. What died in Naturalism and what is mortal in Zola is "scientism," that curious veneration for laboratory workers, their pretentions, and their methods which flourished fifty years ago. What did not die, particularly in Zola, what even during his lifetime stood out with increasing insistence in the novels that came from his pen, was his common humanity, his sympathetic interest in people in the mass, the seething crowds of modern urban civilization. Competent investigators like MM. Deffoux and Zavie began to revise the distorted picture of Zola the "materialist," Zola the "scatologist," and soon there were authentic full-length studies by the young American critic, Matthew Josephson, by the French novelist, Henri Barbusse. The annual pilgrimage to Médan began to take on a new significance, as one novelist after another confessed his fundamental debt to Zola. The French novel had taken one more step away from artificiality and had found a national ancestor to justify the new tendency.

A date could be set to the reversal of the critical verdict on Zola: 1927. It was an important year in the present evolution for other reasons too. It saw the publication, for one thing, of Gide's *Voyage au Congo*, the book in which the most distinguished of living French novelists made a definite break with his ivory-tower past. The Gide of the second manner that emerged in these pages was no longer, as Christian Sénéchal puts it, "to travel egoistically like the Ménalque of his *Immoraliste*." It was also in 1927 that Emmanuel Berl wrote his *Mort de la pensée bourgeoise*, an acid indictment of the sterility of post-War literature in France, and particularly of the novel. The companion volume, *Mort de la morale bourgeoise*, was a further hammer-blow in this critical onslaught.

With the preliminary stage of demolition and critical re-appraisal over, it was time to proceed to something more concrete. The launching of the Populist group of novelists in 1929 was to lay the foundations of the new edifice.

Something has been said already of the more negative aspects of Populism: its reaction against the literature of snobbery, against novels, as Henri Clouard wrote, "in which people pick their souls as other people pick their teeth," against *wagon-lit* exoticism. "Populism is a reaction founded on the realistic tradition and directed against the literature of analysis," ran the Thérive-Lemonnier manifesto. "It is a call to an art based on observation and sincerity. It entails sympathy for the chosen subject-matter and in particular sympathy for the people. . . . It designates on the one hand any work dealing with the common people, whatever its purpose may be, and on the other hand any book which is a continuation of the realistic tradition and which reacts against preciosity in thought or style. . . . Populism is a return to reason." Populism in the last seven years has given a foothold to a score of writers of great promise, it has sealed the reputations of not a few novelists of the first rank, and even of some, like Dabit, who had gone beyond Populism before his death in 1936, and of others, like Giono, who for sectarian reasons have never been officially included in the group. But more than all this, Populism has re-established the Naturalist tradition in the French novel, a Naturalism stripped of "scientism," a Naturalism humanized.

At first the greatest opposition to the Populist movement came from further to the "left," from the simon-pure Proletarians, who affected to believe that no one not a worker or a peasant by birth could write convincingly

about workers or peasants. Before the novelist Henry Poulaille and his group started their attack, Barbusse, in his life of Zola, had already accused the Populists of "slumming," of "visiting the *peuple* as one might visit the zoo on a Sunday afternoon to see the animals." It is not a simple question in spite of reassuring statements from both camps. Guehenno in his remarkable *Caliban parle* (1928) had observed how difficult it was for a writer of humble origin to retain his original perspective as success drew him up and away into other social strata. But, if the political parallel may again be allowed to obtrude, the unification of French left-wing doctrines under the banner of the Popular Front seems to have found its counterpart in literature as well. Populists and Proletarians write side by side, and for the last two or three years it has become increasingly difficult to tell them apart.

Finally, with the ebb of narrowly doctrinal disputes, French novelists of the new generation seem to have espoused the ideal of Dostoyevsky and strive towards "an art which will not only concern itself with the most unusual features of humanity but which will be commensurate with all mankind."

It is now possible to say that there is a new kind of French novel and that it has come into being in the last decade. It does not claim to be superior to its predecessors, but to have shifted the accent of its emphasis. At the same time it is not inferior in any artistic or technical sense. The meticulous pains of an impersonalist like Flaubert, the psychological patience and acumen of a Bourget, have not been lost to the French tradition. In fact they have been enriched. Furthermore, and in spite of the political affiliations of most of the new novelists, the new novel is not a weapon of propaganda in the vulgar sense; it does not set out to "prove" anything. Nowhere

has this been stated so definitely as in the important preface to André Malraux's latest novel, *Le Temps du mépris*, in which the author of *Les Conquérants* argues for the "passionate" as against the impersonal conception of art: "It is not passion which destroys a work of art but the desire to prove something or other. The history of artistic sensibility in France for the last fifty years could be called the death agony of the sense of the comradeship of men (*fraternité virile*). Its real enemy is a vague individualism scattered throughout the nineteenth century and born not of a desire to create the complete man, but of a mere wish to be original and different."

It is with phrases like "*la fraternité virile*" and "*la conception passionnée de l'art*" that Malraux strikes the dominant note of the new novel. I have used the less colourful and more ambiguous terms, human and humane. "Human" in the nineteenth century was something crammed into the test-tubes and squinted at down microscopes; "humane" in the twentieth, freed of its unfortunate association with hospitals for stray dogs and cats, means "human" with something added to it. The new French novel is the old French novel with something added to it.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

A. Critical Works:

Henri Barbusse, *Russie* (1930).

Emmanuel Berl, *Mort de la morale bourgeoise* (1930).

Jean Guehenno, *L'Evangile éternel* (1927); *Caliban parle* (1928); *Conversion à l'humain* (1931).

Léon Lemonnier, *Populisme* (1931).

Henry Poulaille, *Nouvel Age littéraire* (1930).

B. Fiction:

Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932); *Mort à crédit* (1936).

Louis Chaffurin, *Pique-Puce* (1928).

André Chamson, *Les Hommes de la route* (1927); *Le Crime des justes* (1928).

Antonine Coullet-Tessier, *Toche parmi les femmes* (1930).

Eugène Dabit, *Hôtel du Nord* (1929); *Petit-Louis* (1930); *Villa-Oasis ou les faux bourgeois* (1932); *Faubourgs de Paris* (1933); *Un Mort tout neuf* (1934); *La Zone verte* (1935); *Trains de vie* (1936).

Georges Duhamel, *Journal de Salavin* (1927); *Le Club des Lyonnais* (1929).

Louis-Jean Finot, *L'Allumeuse* (1927).

Jean Giono, *Colline* (1929); *Un de Baumugnes* (1929); *Regain* (1930); *Jean le Bleu* (1932); *Le Serpent d'Etoiles* (1932); *Solitude de la pitié* (1932).

Louis Guilloux, *La Maison du peuple* (1927); *Angélina* (1935).

Léon Lemonnier, *Le Sang qu'elle n'avait pas versé* (1929); *Le Baiser de Satan* (1930); *Les Destins sont solidaires* (1931); *Coeur imbécile* (1935).

Céline Lhotte, *La petite Fille aux mains sales* (1928); *Coeur triste chez les sans repos* (1930); *La petite Bismuth* (1932).

André Malraux, *Les Conquérants* (1928); *La Voie royale* (1930); *La Condition humaine* (1933); *Le Temps du mépris* (1935).

Marmouset, *Mal Loti* (1931).

Jean Pallu, *Port d'Escale* (1931).

Jean Prévost, *Les Frères Bouquinquant* (1930).

Tristan Rémy, *Porte Clignancourt* (1929).

Jules Romains, *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* (12 volumes since 1932).

André Thérive, *Le Charbon ardent* (1929); *Anna* (1932).

Henri Troyat, *Faux Jour* (1935).

SWINBURNE: A CENTENARY ESTIMATE

E. K. Brown

THE centenary of Swinburne's birth falls at a time when the excellences of Swinburne's poetry are unlikely to receive their due. In a recent study (1931), Mr. W. R. Rutland, writing as a professed admirer, suggests that Swinburne is as remote as the Elizabethans; he belongs to the past, as unquestionably as Hardy belongs to the present. He has not been dead thirty years; and yet it is not easily remembered that for the last ten years of his life he was currently accepted as the greatest living English poet. It is even more difficult to recall that from 1870 on to the end of the century his lyrical poetry was the purest written in England. Of all the great Victorian poets it was he who made the most direct attack upon the idols of his time, upon the sentimental conception of love, upon bourgeois democracy, upon the institutional expressions of the Christian religion. For his daring he has paid heavily: a sulphurous cloud still hangs over his name, his work has always had about it the aroma of heresy, revolt, and evil. He is the poet of passion, the poet of absolute liberty, the poet of evolution, the poet of tumultuous music. Passion is not now the staple of great literature that it was accounted ten years ago; absolute liberty is dismissed as a chimera, and those who believe in it may soon be obliged to follow Conrad's *Garibaldino* to the mythical republic of Costaguana; the emotional implications of evolution are no longer formative; tumultuous music seems vulgarly emphatic, like the nudes of Ingres and the landscapes of Turner. Swinburne is in danger of becoming a forgotten poet; and it is when a writer is in danger of being forgotten that his centenary should be seized upon as an occasion for evoking

his achievement, turning it leisurely before our eyes and deciding whether or not literature will be served by quietly allowing him to recede into a mere name in the anthologies along with Campbell and Rogers. There is still time enough, however, if Swinburne's achievement seems to justify it, for his place to be in greater company—with Byron, Keats, and Shelley.

Since his death, it must be said, he has had interpreters and advocates of greater capacity and fervour than Tennyson has had, or Browning or Arnold. Sir Edmund Gosse wrote his biography, a masterpiece of discretion; Mr. T. J. Wise has collected and described a vast Swinburne library; there are the critical studies of T. Earle Welby, of Mr. S. C. Chew, of M. de Reul, of Mr. Harold Nicolson, and of Mr. Rutland, all of them sympathetic and penetrating, one, at least, a work of great brilliance and power; finally, in 1928, M. Georges Lafourcade, in his two-volume work, *La Jeunesse de Swinburne*, has made for him the mightiest monument that any of our Victorian poets has yet received, and it is fitting that the definitive work on Swinburne's youth should be written in France.[1] Other interpreters there have been, and most of them enthusiastic. The public and the world of critical readers, however, have not been enthusiastic; and Swinburne's champions must have felt themselves to be at work against heavy odds. They have not won their cause; they have barely told upon opinion.

I

One power Swinburne is generally allowed to have possessed: the power of passionate song. It is with this quality of his poetry that it is best to begin the progress towards a general estimate. By it the poet himself set

[1]His subsequent *Swinburne, A Literary Biography*, is relatively disappointing.

great store. Writing to E. C. Stedman in 1875, he insists on the primary importance of the singing power, if one would write poetry. Stedman had sent him a copy of one of his works on American poetry; and Swinburne passes in review the poets represented there. Two extracts from his letter will tell the whole story. Speaking of Bryant and Lowell he insists:

> I cannot say that either ["Thanatopsis" or the "Commemoration Ode"] leaves in my ear the echo of a single note of song. It is excellent good speech, but if given us as song its first and last duty is to sing. The one is most august meditation, the other a noble expression of deep and grave patriotic feeling on a supreme national occasion; but the thing more necessary, though it may be less noble than these, is the pulse, the fire, the passion of music—the quality of a singer, not of a solitary philosopher, or a patriotic orator.

It is not important that Swinburne may have been wrong in his estimate of Lowell's greatest poem, which so captious a judge as W. C. Brownell has placed with the patriotic passages of Shakespeare. What is important is to note the exactness with which he states the function and relative place in poetry, of substance, emotional and intellectual, and of form. That a poet should like Bryant be capable of august meditation, or like Lowell of an expression of deep feeling on a great subject, is nobler than that he should have the power to sing; but, if he cannot sing, neither meditation nor deep feeling will make of him a poet. And, Swinburne goes on to say, complaining of Emerson's lack of the singing power:

> It is a poor thing to have nothing but melody, and be unable to rise above it into harmony, but one or the other, the less if not the greater, you *must* have. Imagine a man full of great thoughts and emotions and resolved to express them in painting, who has absolutely no power upon either form or colour. Wainwright the mur-

derer,[1] who never had any thought or emotion above those of a pig or a butcher, will be a better man for us than he.

Clearly, Swinburne does not believe that the power to sing is the whole of poetry, he values nobility of substance, intensity of emotion, as much as Ruskin himself; but he dissents from the Ruskinian view—a view seldom consciously held nowadays, but one which moulds to an amazing degree the current notions of poetry—that great substance suffices to create great poetry.

In lyric poetry always, and usually in epic and dramatic, the power to sing was what Swinburne sought for first. The poets he most admired were those who were great singers and also great prophets: Marlowe, Shelley, Hugo, and Shakespeare (who is the supreme expression of the English race and as such an unconscious prophet). The prophets whose song was wheezy and harsh could never satisfy him; indeed they were less precious to him than the singers who were incapable of thought. He valued highly his own power of song. There is an amusing record of a conversation at Jowett's tea-table, in which, on being asked who among the English poets had the best ear, Swinburne said: "Shakespeare, without doubt; then Milton; then Shelley; then, I do not know what other people would do, but I should put myself." Indeed, unless one wishes to give the fourth place to Spenser, it is difficult to defend another choice. From the first lines of the first chorus in his first great poem:

> When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
> The mother of months in meadow or plain
> Fills the shadows and windy places
> With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain . . .

to so late a poem as "England: An Ode," with such lines

[1]Wainwright was Swinburne's favourite example of the immoral artist. An admirer of Blake, himself a painter and critic, he murdered his sister-in-law to collect £18,000 of life-insurance.

as these which a few years ago, when quoted in the House of Commons, set that body in an uproar:

> All our past acclaims our future: Shakespeare's voice and Nelson's hand,
> Milton's faith and Wordsworth's trust in this our chosen and chainless land, . . .

always he is a master of song.

The charge laid against his singing is that of monotony. This charge rests upon a misapprehension of the nature of great lyric poetry. Most great lyrists have a personal style, a formed and permanent manner; Petrarch has such a style and manner, and Shelley and Leopardi. Whatever the metre and stanza may be, whatever the mood expressed, the poem is unmistakeably theirs—it has their accent, the imprint not merely of a personality but of a style. So it is with Swinburne. Whether his subject is passion, or political idealism, or the misdeeds of Mr. Henry Buxton Forman, he writes in a highly personal way, which nevertheless is always, or almost always, appropriate to his theme. When it is objected that his verse is monotonous, what is really under attack is not the continued presence of a style and manner (which are in Swinburne no more uniform than in most other great lyrical poets) but the fact of his diffuseness, or else, it may be, that the critic finds Swinburne's style and manner intrinsically disagreeable, and the more he reads the more, of course, he is exasperated. But diffuseness is not necessarily monotony; and only an indolent mind will confuse a fundamental dislike of a style and manner with an impression that a dislike develops only because a style and manner are exhibited at unusual length.

To many people his style and manner are disagreeable. Why they are found disagreeable, Mr. Eliot, following and clarifying Welby's view, has explained in his essay,

"Swinburne the Poet." Besides being diffuse, Swinburne dwells, not in a world of objects, but in a world of words. If one looks in his poetry for the clear shapes of particular things, which stand forth in soft outline in the poems of Rossetti, one will be not only disappointed but exasperated. If one expects that each line, or even each stanza, will make its specific, isolable contribution to the statement of an idea or communication of an emotion or sensation, one will be expecting what does not exist. The effect which Swinburne seeks to produce is a total effect; and in producing this effect he relies (apart from the intellectual content) chiefly upon sound. Mr. Eliot has quoted a passage from "The Triumph of Time" which, so far as a brief passage can, admirably illustrates Swinburne's lack of particularization and his dependence on sound:

> There lived a singer in France of old
> By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
> In a land of sand and ruin and gold
> There shone one woman, and none but she.

And he comments: "It is the word that gives him the thrill, not the object." "Gold" and "dolorous" and "ruin" and "shone;" the phrases "midland sea" and "France of old;" the movement of the lines, too; it is by such devices as these that Swinburne communicates the mysterious sadness which is the soul of the passage. This is not the way of the English poets; and the reader, if unaccustomed to Swinburne—or the French poets—is upset by a sense that all is vague to him, and feels that he must grope towards a meaning that so far has eluded him. In its greatest periods, English poetry has followed the doctrine of Keats that "the poet should have distinctness for his luxury," that is, for his supreme glory. A taste formed in reading the Elizabethans, Milton, and the poetry of our nineteenth century, will demand such dis-

tinctness. It is not to be had from Swinburne. "He dwells in a world of words;" they gave him the thrill and it is only through them that he can communicate it to us.

As Mr. Richards remarks, it is foolish to ask for distinctness. He quotes a stanza from "Before the Mirror," a characteristic Swinburne stanza:

> There glowing ghosts of flowers
> Draw down, draw nigh;
> And wings of swift spent hours
> Take flight and fly;
> She sees by formless gleams,
> She hears across cold streams,
> Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh.

Mr. Richards says appropriately: "Little beyond vague thoughts of the things the words stand for is required." He insists that the absence of vivid imagery is no better a ground for depreciating a poem which depends on other effects, than the absence of profound thought would be. But the English reader, unaware of the narrowness of the range of his taste and fatigued by a long succession of stanzas resembling that quoted, will doubtless go on saying that Swinburne's verse is monotonous, when all he really means is that he finds Swinburne's style and manner unacceptable because they lack distinctness.[2]

Not only does Swinburne rely on words and the harmony of words beyond the custom of our poets; but he also delights—to return to Mr. Eliot's second point—in diffuseness. Relying on sound, he wishes, as Spenser did, to protract his poems so that they may become irresistible incantations, the movement finally lulling the reader into a condition in which he receives the emotional effect at which the poet aims. Swinburne's lyrics, unlike

[2]It is significant that the critic who has most earnestly sought to vindicate Swinburne's imagination is a Frenchman, M. Lafourcade. See *La Jeunesse de Swinburne*, II, pp. 542 *ff.*

those of great pictorial poets such as Keats and Gautier, have little structural design. A single stanza could be abstracted at almost any point from "Hertha," or "Faustine," or "Dolores," and the poem would suffer very small damage. Of "Dolores," indeed, Swinburne wrote, significantly, to Howell: "I have added yet four more jets of boiling and gushing infamy to the perennial and poisonous fountain of 'Dolores'." In a postcript he announces "ten more verses."[3] "Dolores" is indeed a perennial fountain; there seems no need for it ever to cease; its stanzas are separate "jets," each a unit, and scarcely any in intimate relation with its neighbours. Still almost every one of the fifty-five stanzas communicates intense emotion; the cumulative effect is almost intolerably strong; and yet it is impossible for a sympathetic reader to rise from reading the last stanza without wishing, and wishing ardently, that there were more, and yet more, to maintain one in elation.

The vagueness and the diffuseness, the riot of mellifluous words, all play their part in producing the emotional effect; but they are not the whole of Swinburne's manner and style. They are auxiliaries to his matchless rhythm, a rhythm which depends more than that of any other English poet on anapaests and choriambics and upon lavish use of alliteration and assonance. It is to Swinburne's rhythm that the analyst must finally appeal in the attempt to account fully for the shock of pleasure that his poetry can give, to the "new and resounding rhythms," in Professor Grierson's phrase, to the melodies

[3]The manuscript discloses that the first draft of the poem was entirely chaotic. The variants of this and other poems frequently suggest that for Swinburne the tonality of the word was the chief consideration. In the twenty-second stanza of "Ilicet" he rejected in succession "unprofitable," "unperishable," "unfathomable," "inexorable," "unconquerable," "inevitable," in favour of his final choice, "unalterable," in the line "Of the old unalterable gods."

in which, says M. Lalou, "the rhythm actually acquires the strength of a perfume."

Swinburne's most novel rhythms are those which are extremely speedy, and those which are extremely languorous. To perceive how vast his range of rhythm is, one need only set side by side a stanza from "Dolores:"

> I have passed from the outermost portal
> To the shrine where a sin is a prayer;
> What care though the service be mortal?
> O our Lady of Torture, what care?
> All thine the last wine that I pour is,
> The last in the chalice we drain,
> O fierce and luxurious Dolores,
> Our Lady of Pain.

and one from "A Forsaken Garden:"

> All are at one now, roses and lovers,
> Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
> Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
> In the air now soft with a summer to be.
> Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
> Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
> When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
> We shall sleep.

Whether the anapaestic movement be swift as a Bacchanalian dance, or slow and grave as a dirge, it is always fervent and intense, it is always the measure of a "prosodist magician." In the dazzling light of beauty such as this, it seems time wasted to reason about the lyrical power of Swinburne; it is wiser perhaps to say with Saintsbury: "If anybody wants something finer . . . let him seek noon at fourteen o'clock, and when he has found it, sit down and eat better bread than is made of wheat." As a greater than Saintsbury has said, and one whose admiration for Swinburne was profound: when we are

solicited by the impressions of such beauty, "we shall hardly have time to make theories."

II

But the power of passionate song is not enough to make the greatest poetry, as Swinburne wisely said. How insistent he was in requiring more, appears in his attitude towards Keats, of which M. Lafourcade has given a full account in the introduction to his edition of Swinburne's *Hyperion*. To Keats, as painter of nature and master of imagery, Swinburne gave warm praise, saying that he was unrivalled "in that especial field of work where all the giants and all the gods of art would fail to stand against him for an hour." But more than imagery, and pictorial art generally, is needed; and more Keats does not, in Swinburne's view, have. What is needed is a passionate belief in ideas and a wish to express them with all the magical splendour of great song. Speaking of Arnold's view that all great poetry is a criticism of life, he asserts: "All sane men must be willing to concede the truth of an assertion which [Arnold] seems to fling down as a challenge . . . that a school of poetry divorced from any moral idea is a school of poetry divorced from life."

What, then, are the ideas which Swinburne himself sings?

The *Poems and Ballads* of 1866 are dedicated not simply to the description of passion but to the praise of the idea of passion. "Rightly considered," remarks Professor Beach, "the sensualism of his first volume of *Poems and Ballads*, the worship of Venus, is but one article in the creed of naturalism." It is commonly said that Swinburne is not a great poet of love: "Of love," says Professor Grierson, "he knows only one mood." This is very chastely said; but it is well, I think, to speak more

plainly. Swinburne's letters abound in allusions to the Marquis de Sade, and in quotations from his novel *Justine*; and the records of his life, many of which are still withheld, establish that during the years when he was writing his greatest love-poems he associated in practice as well as in theory the emotion of love with the infliction of pain.[1] In "Anactoria" and "Félise" and "Faustine" and "Dolores," the picture of love is in the main a sadist's picture. In such poems he may indeed be said to know only one mood of love. But there are others. "The Triumph of Time," for example, is usually associated with his rejection by Jane Faulkner. In that poem there are scattered images of cruelty and pain; but the poem records, chiefly, in phrases and rhythms of mastered agitation, the sense that without Jane the world is an empty and withered place. It is a supremely effective expression of a mood of love which is utterly remote from the ecstasies over Dolores and her strange sisterhood: the mood is one that Yeats and Housman have both expressed. "The Year of the Rose," in which the mood is different again, is no less genuine, scarcely less beautiful. Summarily stated, the truth is that Swinburne was the first poet to sing one perverted form of love, but was not by this peculiarity incapacitated from singing other forms with a power not inferior to that of the great love-poets of the age. Even of the Dolores group M. Lafourcade has rightly said (the remarks of Swinburne's contemporary critics confirm the view): "Whatever the secret springs of his inspiration, we must recognise that Swinburne managed (and this was an artistic *tour de force*) to give us the crystal flow of the rushing stream and conceal its

[1]M. Lafourcade has furnished unassailable evidence (*La Jeunesse de Swinburne*, I, p. 265, n. 109, and *Swinburne, A Literary Biography*, p. 196). English critics have been extremely reluctant to consider the question.

painful origins . . . ; we shall find little which will strike the uninitiated as strange or suspicious." The judgment on a poem is to be rendered on what it contains and can communicate, not on what we read into it after a study of the poet's life.

The idea of passion which dominates the first collection was not long to reign over the poet. "The impulse," as he says, "ceased." One of the most amazing transformations in the history of our poetry was to come over him in the months which followed the publication of *Poems and Ballads*. This transformation Sir Edmund Gosse has described with gentle humour. Jowett, who had not ceased to exercise a protective friendship over his former pupil, is assumed to have called a council of the poet's more respectable friends; Giuseppe Mazzini was consulted; an effort was made to discover "what could be done *with* and *for* Algernon." The upshot was that Mazzini wrote to Swinburne, expressing his admiration for the "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia;" that Swinburne called on Mazzini; and that Jowett's manœuvres led to Swinburne's becoming the greatest political poet of his time and place. So runs the story, entertaining, rich in the irony that Gosse loved; unfortunately for ironists, M. Lafourcade makes short work of demolishing it. Swinburne was already acquainted with Mazzini; and immediately after the publication of *Poems and Ballads* he had written to W. M. Rossetti, saying that he was tired of the poetry of passion and that it was now his chief consolation that he believed firmly in the ideal of liberty, as he had always done, and cared fervently for the future of Italy. *Songs before Sunrise* are accordingly the expression of one of the strongest and, as it was to prove, one of the most permanent elements in his mind.

It is upon them that his reputation as a prophet, an

intellectual poet comparable with Shelley and Hugo, chiefly rests. In the organ-notes of "The Prelude," Swinburne describes the change that has occurred within him, his repudiation of the rose-gathering attitude—the search for intense sensation—which had ruled his youth; and in the grave rhythms of the long but simple stanza which he has here selected, he affirms his belief in the supreme greatness of man, the greatest form of universal life, his dedication to political idealism, his conversion to the solemn frame of mind of those

> . . . who rest not; who think long
> Till they discern as from a hill
> At the sun's hour of morning song,
> Known of souls only, and those souls free,
> The sacred spaces of the sea.

He flicks with scorn those degenerate Italians who, acquiescing in their political servitude, live a life of sensual luxuriance, a life which recalls the paganism of *Poems and Ballads*:

> And they slept and they rioted on their rose-hung beds
> With mouths on flame,
> And with love-locks vine-chapleted, and with rose-crowned heads
> And robes of shame.

He upbraids the French for their desertion of the ideals of the Revolution and their abject submission to Napoleon the Little; he upbraids the English for their recreancy to the principles of the Commonwealth, and their deafness to the prophetic voices of Milton, Shelley, and Landor. Nowhere else in English verse does the hatred of the autocrat blaze with so scornful a rage as in such stanzas as these from "A Marching Song:"

> And thou, whom sea-walls sever
> From lands unwalled with seas,

Wilt thou endure for ever,
O Milton's England, these?
Thou that wast his Republic, wilt thou clasp their knees? . . .

These princelings with gauze winglets
That buzz in the air unfurled,
These summer-swarming kinglets,
These thin worms crowned and curled,
That bask and blink and warm themselves about the world; . . .

These limbs, supine, unbuckled,
In rottenness of rest,
These sleepy lips blood-suckled
And satiate of thy breast,
These dull wide mouths that drain thee dry and call thee blest; . . .

Lest thine own sea disclaim thee,
Lest thine own sons despise,
Lest lips shoot out that name thee
And seeing thee men shut eyes,
Take thought with all thy people, turn thine head and rise.

The absence of oppression is, for Swinburne as for Mill, prerequisite to all virtue. It is instructive to consider *Songs before Sunrise* as the rendering in poetry of the substance of the essay *On Liberty*, of which Swinburne wrote some few years later: "Ever since his *Liberty* came out it has been the text-book of my creed as to public morals and political faith." All the main aspects of Mill's essay are developed in the *Songs*: admiration of the Greek world; doubt as to the total effect of Christianity on the moral nature of men; hatred of the tyranny of the majority; insistence on the supreme value to the community and to the universe of freely developing individuals; almost mystical faith in the ideal of liberty, liberty of thought, liberty of discussion, liberty of action, liberty for everyone, always, everywhere:

For where Freedom lives not, there live no good things.

To the spirit of the *Songs* the later political poetry of

Swinburne appears to be in irreconcilable contrast. From a revolutionary idealist he appears to have become an aggressive nationalist, almost a jingo. The customary explanation of the shift is the influence of Theodore Watts-Dunton, a convenient scapegoat for all in the later Swinburne which deserves censure. But there are other elements in the poet's position after 1879 which must be given their weight. He had in his songs deplored the autocracy of Louis Napoleon and the disunion of Italy. Now Louis Napoleon had been driven from the throne and a republican regime instituted in France, among whose first actions had been the revocation of Hugo's banishment. Italy, if it had not killed or exiled its sovereigns, had at least clipped their wings; and the *risorgimento* had furnished it with at least the appearance of unity. Iniquity was no longer in the saddle. If Swinburne could no longer burn with rage at the sight of a recreant France and a prostrate Italy, he continued to attack the autocrats of other European countries, notably the Czars.

Towards England, indeed, his attitude had changed, although the state of England had scarcely altered. He was an enemy of the Irish and the Boers; he was the advocate of oppressive policy abroad. The explanation of the new tone in his political utterances about England, lies, I suggest, in his immersion in the literature of the Elizabethan age. He came to feel that Elizabethan drama was the greatest form of the greatest period of the greatest literature that the world had ever seen. Between his mind and the English oppression of the Irish and the Boers came the loved and shadowy figures of Chapman and Marlowe, of Shakespeare and Milton. He was thinking about the England of these, especially of Shakespeare,

when he appeared to be talking of the England of Disraeli and Chamberlain:

> More than that sovereign lordship of the sea
> Bequeathed to Cromwell from Elizabeth . . .
> More than all deeds wrought of thy strong right hand,
> This praise keeps most thy fame's memorial strong,
> That thou wast head of all these streams of song,
> And time bows down to thee as Shakespeare's land.

And who were the Boers, who were the Irish (among whom he saw, moreover, too many priests for his peace of mind) that they should contest the will of the sons of Shakespeare?[2] When Swinburne spoke of the domestic situation, of the claims of the House of Lords to impede the popular will, he kept the tone of his early revolutionary poetry: the Lords he taunts, in celebrated lines, as men

> Who are Graces by grace of such mothers
> As brightened the bed of King Charles.

Songs before Sunrise is his central book. "Other books are books," he has said, "*Songs before Sunrise* is myself." It is his central book because, beside the lyrics of liberty, he there gives us his conception of the universe in the poems which may be associated with "Hertha." He believes that all is one, abjuring with Emerson and Meredith the dualism of the elder Victorian poets and freeing himself from the coil of problems with which they were wrestling. It is in this belief in the unity of all, rather than in his attitude towards passion, that he is perhaps most modern. His view of the universe is one easily reconcilable with the fullest implications of the evolutionary hypothesis; and yet, in the crash of ideals that this involved, Swinburne's is a valiant note. For him, man is a being of unfathomed greatness; with the reform of

[2]Even republican France was odious to him in later years; he mistrusted French policy towards England.

society, the rooting out of false ideas about the nature of the universe and the function of humanity, man will achieve ends of perfect beauty and perfect goodness. Again, Swinburne is speaking with the essay *On Liberty* in his mind. His political faith, like his faith in passion, is but one tenet in his doctrine of naturalism. If man will but believe in the greatness of his nature he will speedily set to the bloody work of destroying shams and tyrannies, with a sense that the cause is holy and the enemy doomed from the outset. In the poem significantly named "Messidor" he bids man begin:

> The dumb dread people that sat
> All night without screen for the night,
> All day without food for the day,
> They shall give not their harvest away,
> They shall eat of its fruit and wax fat:
> They shall see the desire of their sight,
> Though the ways of the seasons be steep,
> They shall climb with face to the light;
> Put in the sickles and reap.

Urging that the sickles be raised, Swinburne in a dozen poems seeks to cheer man with the sense that he is the greatest element in the universe, ringing the changes on the theme,

> Glory to Man in the highest, for Man is the Master of things.

III

When Swinburne published *Songs before Sunrise*, he was four years beyond the age of Shelley's death and within two years of the age of Byron's. He had before him thirty-eight years, more than the whole life-span of either, and his mind was to be unclouded to the end. What in these years was he to do?

He was to become a scholar in Elizabethan drama, and to do for Chapman, Jonson, and others what only a mind which was both erudite and creative could do. He was to write seven tragedies in the Elizabethan manner—he had already written two—and some narrative poems. He was also to continue the composition of lyrical poetry. And yet he was not to justify his early promise.

The critical works of Swinburne, whether on Elizabethan or modern themes, are often penetrating and usually scholarly; but they lack the precision of impression and design of Pater and the balance and wisdom of Arnold; they are more properly to be compared with the critical papers of Symonds, whose zeal and verbosity they rival. Swinburne's criticism is, in the main, of the kind Shelley might have written in middle age. It consists of pleas and harangues rather than judgments.

For all his saturation in the literature of the Elizabethan age, his tragedies lack the primitive force of the great Elizabethans. They have but few lifelike characters, and too many "megaphones" for the author, as Mr. Granville-Barker says; few scenes which capture the emotions. They are, moreover, quite unadapted for performance in the theatre; in one of them John Knox is permitted to rant for four hundred lines and in general there is too little action, too much speech. His diffuseness serves Swinburne ill in the drama. He recognized the chasm between such plays and the modern stage: "When I write plays," he remarks, "it is with a view to their being acted at the Globe, the Red Bull, or the Blackfriars," which is to say, with a view to their being acted only on the stage of sympathetic imaginations. His distaste for the modern stage went so far as to make him averse to witnessing performances of the plays of Shakespeare or Hugo.

But in the last half of his life, as in the first, he wrote a very large amount of lyrical poetry; and this has been under-estimated by the world, as has the later poetry of Tennyson, and, in our own time, of Yeats. One of the great themes of his younger days is completely absent from the later collections—the theme of passion. But much of the political and philosophical poetry of the later years is in no degree inferior, either in intellect or in music, to what he had written in his first volumes. "The Armada" and the Hugo birthday ode, to name but two of his later lyrics, show his singing and his prophetic power at the height, or very close to it. In place of the passion, which had given wings to so much of his best poetry, there is now, in "A Nympholept" for example, an intense poetry of nature for which there is no parallel in his earlier work. In "The Armada," the theme of political freedom, the theme of philosophical naturalism, and the theme of natural beauty are combined in a perfect whole. The Spaniards represent the forces of evil, the tyrants, the supernaturalists; the English represent the new order, lovers of liberty and nature (in its philosophical as well as its aesthetic sense). The English are victors because Nature, expressed in the sea (now the chief of Swinburne's symbols), has determined to annihilate its enemies:

> Earth's hosts are with them, and with them is heaven: but with us is the sea.

It is Hertha herself who fights against the Spaniards; and against the Nature-goddess the forces of Spain—the might of the Spanish God and the might of erring and misapplied human intelligence—are powerless. The triumphant ring of the verse celebrates no mere English victory; it celebrates the victory of that mysterious deity which appears more distinctly in the Hugo birthday ode. And "The Armada" is rich with natural splendour.

Still, taking the later lyrics as a whole, the early promise is not fulfilled. Swinburne does not renew himself as Hugo does; he is singing the old themes with an accent which has less intensity, with a rhythm which has less sweep, less of the dizzy speed of his early days. Old age is no boon to a lyrical poet.

IV

The greatest lyrical force to appear in English poetry since the death of Shelley—that is the estimate of the most eminent of living Swinburnians, M. Lafourcade. There will not, I think, be any dissent from the suggestion, which in this essay I have assumed to be true, that Swinburne's claims to greatness rest upon his lyrics and the lyrical passages in his narratives and tragedies. His lyricism expresses itself without much assistance from two qualities which, in English poetry at least, usually characterize the masters of the lyric—firm composition, and distinct, vivid imagery. Shelley, too, lacks these qualities, if not altogether, certainly in very large part. In compensation Swinburne and Shelley offer luxuriant song and vehement thought. Swinburne's thought, like Shelley's, is that of a revolutionary idealist; it is without hesitations or nuances; it is simple, bold, and passionate; and to those who are out of tune with revolutionary idealism it seems superficial, ignorant, and appropriate only to lands beyond the moon. "The ideas of Shelley," says Mr. Eliot, "seem to me to be always the ideas of adolescence." He goes on to call them "feeble," "shabby," and "repellent;" and to assert that, not because he does not share them, but because he cannot even respect them, he is obliged to leave Shelley unread. Some such view is, I suspect, taken of Swinburne's thought in our time; and this is one of the reasons why his poetry is little read. But

his ideas are intellectually respectable: such doctrines as the unity of man with nature, the dignity of humanity, the supreme value of liberty, are not easily dismissed as feeble or shabby. They are typical doctrines of John Stuart Mill; and if some one chooses to say that Mill is no longer intellectually respectable, I throw up my hands, and am content to leave Swinburne, as thinker, in his company. Appropriately, Swinburne's revolutionary idealism is clothed in verse which moves as swiftly as the wings of thought, which stirs a tumult of feelings so great that the reader is eager to relieve an overburdened spirit by violent action. At his best, between Swinburne's thought and his art there is perfect harmony: a multiplicity of straining, intense particles are caught and held in a strange unity. The effect produced is not complex or fine but it is strong; and even those who resent its furious strength cannot, if they expose themselves to it, resist its impact.

SWINBURNE AND THE POET-LAUREATESHIP
1892

PAUL KNAPLUND

LORD TENNYSON died early in the morning of October 6, 1892. His death had been expected for some time, and people interested in the laureateship had discussed possible candidates for the post. At such a discussion on July 8, 1891, H. H. Asquith expressed the opinion that the laureateship would be kept in suspension on Tennyson's death; Arthur Balfour said that Swinburne ought to have it; John Morley thought that the non-conformists would object to Swinburne, and Lord Bowen favoured the appointment of Dr. Bridges.[1]

When Tennyson died, Gladstone, an old friend of the poet, was prime minister; his government included Asquith and Morley; his party relied largely upon the support of the non-conformists; and among Gladstone's most intimate friends was Lord Acton, the famous liberal Roman Catholic historian. It appears that Acton had, before the death of Tennyson, discussed with Gladstone the claims of Swinburne as Tennyson's successor; when the news of the death reached Acton, he lost no time in calling to the attention of the prime minister the disqualifications of Swinburne; and during the fortnight following he assiduously gathered further evidence to support his original contention.

Writing from the Athenaeum Club, on October 6, to Gladstone, who was at Hawarden, Acton suggested that Gladstone should examine the early poems of Swinburne

[1] *Private Diaries of Sir Algernon West*, ed. Horace G. Hutchinson, New York, 1922, p. 19. There seems to have been some discussion whether the laureateship was "in Her Majesty's gift as a household appointment" or at the disposal of the prime minister (*ibid.*, p. 64).

before filling "the great vacancy."[2] Gladstone replied on the following day that the death of Tennyson had moved "many and much;" he had done a great work; he and Wordsworth had also made the laureateship great and clean; Southey was not small but he had been appointed "against what was bigger;" before Southey, Gladstone believed, the laureateship had been "small," and he was disturbed by features connected with the question of the succession. He had followed Acton's suggestion to read Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, 1866. Gladstone considered them "bad and terrible;" and he inquired whether they had been dropped, if so this would be "a reparation."[3] Acton answered promptly, on October 8, that the *Poems and Ballads* had not been excluded from the later editions of the works of Swinburne; and on October 9 Acton called to the attention of Gladstone the fact that when Tennyson was awarded the laureateship the sale of his books and poems increased greatly, so that he died a rich man; it was fair to conclude that the appointment of Swinburne would have a similar effect upon the demand for his works, including "the offensive part" of them, and it would be looked upon as an endorsement. But Acton was not willing to support Augustine Birrell's idea of leaving the post vacant. Delay would lead to intrigues and perhaps give another prime minister the opportunity to make the appointment. Acton then suggested Ruskin, "the greatest poet in England," as a possible candidate.[4]

In his reply, dated Hawarden, October 10, Gladstone said that he was aware of the fact that the *Poems and Ballads* were being sold but he wondered whether the most offensive ones were still included. In the judgment of

[2]Original MS., Gladstone Papers, British Museum.
[3]Copy, Letter Books, XXIII, p. 41: *ibid.*
[4]Original MSS., *ibid.*

Gladstone the licentiousness of Swinburne differed from that of others in its intensity and earnestness. He needed time to consider the matter, and he would inquire about the state of Ruskin's health.[5] The inquiry took the form of a private letter of the same date to a mutual friend of Gladstone and Ruskin, Sir Henry Acland, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. After explaining the difficulties that he faced in attempting to appoint a poet laureate, Gladstone asked whether it was true that Ruskin was mentally in good health, only not capable of exertion. The answer from Acland, however, extinguished all hope.[6]

Meanwhile the discussions and inquiries concerning Swinburne continued. George Wyndham pressed the claims of Swinburne in a letter to Gladstone's second daughter, Mrs. Drew, at Hawarden Castle. Wyndham admitted that the *Poems and Ballads*, first series, might be cited against Swinburne, but they might be classed among the sins of his youth. With the letter Wyndham sent a volume of Swinburne's poems published in 1890, and he called particular attention to "The Seamew" and "The Jacobite's Exile."[7] Among others who favoured Swinburne were the Prince of Wales, and Spencer Lyttleton, a nephew of Mrs. Gladstone. This support made careful inquiries necessary, and George Murray, one of Gladstone's private secretaries, was sent to the British Museum; he reported that Swinburne had never withdrawn a word of his *Poems and Ballads*; on the contrary, he had published a pamphlet in the defence of them.[8]

[5]Copy, Letter Books, XXIII, p. 45: *ibid.*

[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 47, 52.

[7]J. W. Mackail and Guy Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, London, 1925, I, p. 267.

[8]West, *Diaries*, pp. 63-4. In a letter published in the *Athenaeum*, March 10, 1877, Swinburne had written about the *Poems and Ballads*, 1866: "There is not one 'piece,' there is not one syllable in any one copy ever printed of that book

Writing to Gladstone on October 11, Acton pointed out that Swinburne had refused to omit or modify the early *Poems and Ballads*. James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, had asserted that the laureateship had not increased Tennyson's income, which, if true, might weaken the case against Swinburne; Acton therefore favoured further inquiries on this point. Grant Duff[9] had brought forward Lewis Morris, but Acton had found that he was unpopular with the Liberal press.[10]

As was his wont in most matters, Gladstone made every effort to give full consideration to the merits of Swinburne. Writing to Acton on October 17, he asked whether Swinburne by withdrawals had brought himself "within the range of possibility." Concerning other candidates, Gladstone observed that William Morris was "an out and out Socialist," and that Lewis Morris had put himself forward but none seemed to favour him. One, Henderson, Gladstone described as "a strong young poet." He had, however, been imprisoned for three months for participating in a Socialist riot and was now dedicating poems to a friend serving a ten-year sentence. Austin and Buchanan and "other shadows," Gladstone saw flitting at a distance.[11] On October 18, Acton again informed Gladstone that Swinburne had refused to omit, to withdraw, or to purify *Poems and Ballads*. Furthermore, in a book published during the Russo-Turkish war, called *Notes—by an English Republican*, Swinburne had launched

which has ever been changed or cancelled since the day of publication." Acton called this letter to Gladstone's attention (Acton to Gladstone, Oct. 11, 18, 23, 1892. Original MSS.: Gladstone Papers).

[9]Statesman and author who had deserted Gladstone on the Home Rule question.

[10]Original MSS., Gladstone Papers.

[11]Copy, Letter Books, XXIII, p. 52: *ibid.* One of those "shadows" was Sir Theodore Martin, biographer of the Prince Consort (Acton to Gladstone, Oct. 8, 18, and 23, 1892. Original MSS.: *ibid*).

a violent attack on Russia; and in "Russia, an Ode" printed in the *Fortnightly*, August, 1890, he had urged tyrannicide as a cure for the ills of Russia. Acton confessed himself dazzled by the splendour of the better passages in the poems of Swinburne; none approached him as a writer of verse, but there was a consistency of evil in his mind and in his career which compelled Acton to oppose his appointment as poet laureate.[12] Concerning Lewis Morris, Acton wrote that he was open to the reproach of being his own advocate and of having friends who were too demonstrative. Nevertheless, Acton admitted that Lewis Morris was popular, his works had a large circulation, and his poems revealed "purity and elevation of tone." William Morris was a stronger candidate, but he was impossible by being a Communist "with unpleasant associations." In conclusion, Acton summed up the case against Swinburne: he had been ostentatiously vicious; he had proclaimed himself a republican, and he had openly advocated the assassination of the Czar—the imperial brother and ally of the English sovereign. To bestow the laurel crown on such a poet would be to hallow and encourage vice and to give offence to the Queen. Five days later Acton again wrote to Gladstone about the sins of Swinburne. In this letter he commented favourably on Lewis Morris and advised Gladstone that James Bryce knew "all about William Morris."[13]

The result of these discussions and inquiries was that

[12]Original MSS., *ibid.* For *Notes by an English Republican* see *The Complete Works of Algernon Swinburne*, ed. Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise, London, 1925-7, XV, pp. 411-29.

[13]Original MSS., Gladstone Papers. Sir Algernon West asserts (*Diaries*, 69) that Bryce recommended Coventry Patmore for the laureateship, but in a letter to the Queen, Nov. 6, 1892, Bryce lists Patmore and F. W. H. Myers as poets who had ceased to write, and Bridges and W. Watson as having written too little to be considered for the laureateship (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, series 3, II, pp. 177, 178).

Gladstone on November 4, 1892, wrote to the Queen that he did not see his way clear to make any recommendation for the laureateship; and on November 25, 1892, the Queen recorded in her journal that after a talk with Gladstone it had been decided to leave the post vacant.[14]

And so it remained until 1895 when Lord Salisbury became prime minister. He is reported to have said that Alfred Austin received the laureateship "because he wanted it."[15]

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 187. For letters from Gladstone to the Queen and to her private secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby, concerning the laureateship see *ibid.*, p. 170.

[15] West, *Diaries*, p. 65.

CANADA AND THE THREAT OF WAR

A Discussion of Mr. Mackenzie King's Foreign Policy

ESCOTT REID

THE tragic and inescapable fact about the present world situation is that we are living in the shadow of an impending war. Another first-class war may not yet be inevitable. A miracle or a succession of miracles may remove that shadow. There can be no doubt, however, that the probability of another first-class war in the near future is very great.

It is with the near future that a statesman in office must be mainly concerned—not with the distant future nor with the immediate or distant past. When the world is stumbling daily from crisis to crisis and is in danger of stumbling any day from crisis to catastrophe, a minister for foreign affairs must be mainly concerned not with who or what is responsible for the present international anarchy, nor with the long-run objectives of foreign policy but with what his country's policy should be to-day, to-morrow, or during the next twelve months.

What is a good rule for the foreign minister is perhaps a good rule for the foreign minister's contemporary critic. The critic ought not to waste his time crying over the milk that was spilt during the Sino-Japanese dispute, the Chaco war, the Italo-Abyssinian campaign. That is the historian's job: to apportion the blame between this country and that—between Japan and the United States, between Canada and Italy, between France, Germany, Great Britain, and so on; between this person and that—M. Poincaré, President Wilson, Herr Hitler, and Mr. Mackenzie King; between capitalism and communism, socialism and fascism, stupidity and malevolence. The

most useful thing a critic of Mr. Mackenzie King's present foreign policy can do is to ask whether his is a desirable policy for Canada to follow in the near future.

Mr. King's foreign policy, as deduced from his statements and actions since his reassuming office on October 23, 1935, can be summed up as follows:[1]

1. The guiding principle in the formulation of Canada's foreign policy should be the maintenance of the unity of Canada as a nation.
2. Canada's foreign policy is, in the main, not a matter of Canada's relations to the League, but of Canada's relations to the United Kingdom and the United States.
3. Canada should, as a general rule, occupy a back seat at Geneva or elsewhere when European or Asiatic problems are being discussed.
4. Canada is under no *obligation* to participate in the military sanctions of the League or in the defence of any other part of the Commonwealth.
5. Canada is under no *obligation* to participate in the economic sanctions of the League.
6. Before the Canadian government agrees in future to participate in military or economic sanctions or in war, the approval of the parliament or people of Canada will be secured.
7. Canada is willing to participate in international inquiries into international economic grievances.

1. *The guiding principle in the formulation of Canada's foreign policy should be the maintenance of the unity of Canada as a nation.*

With the first of these principles it is difficult to quarrel. The purpose of the Canadian government's

[1]For a detailed presentation see my "Mr. Mackenzie King's Foreign Policy, 1935-1936" (*Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, III, Feb., 1937).

policy—whether foreign or domestic—ought, of course, to be to promote the welfare of the people of Canada. The normal assumption upon which a Canadian government must work is that the welfare of the people of Canada would be promoted by the continued existence of the Canadian nation, held together not by force but by common consent. The guiding principle in the formulation of Canada's domestic and foreign policy should, therefore, be the maintenance of the unity of Canada as a nation. This means that a government should not adopt a policy on a matter of overwhelming importance, involving deep differences of opinion between Canadians, unless this policy is supported not merely by a substantial majority of Canadians but by substantial majorities in each important section of Canada. Otherwise there will develop between different groups of the Canadian people cleavages so great that the continued existence of the Dominion of Canada may be gravely endangered.

The argument in favour of this first principle of Mr. King's foreign policy can be put another way. One may believe that the main objective of Canada's foreign policy should be the maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire, or of the U.S.S.R., or the defence of democracy, socialism, or the rule of law. It does not follow from this that in the event of an attack on the British Empire, the U.S.S.R., democracy, socialism, or the rule of law, the Canadian government should try to come to their defence with all the forces at its command, if an attempt to intervene on such a scale would provoke so serious a civil disturbance that any effective intervention would be rendered impossible. The maintenance of a substantial degree of Canadian unity is an essential prerequisite to the effective carrying out of any foreign policy.

2. *Canada's foreign policy is, in the main, not a matter of Canada's relations to the League but of Canada's relations to the United Kingdom and the United States.*

Under present conditions this statement is a mere truism. Collective security does not exist. The League has still, as Mr. King has said, "a long-range importance;" but in a world which is on the brink of war, our relations with the United Kingdom, and the United States, are of more immediate importance, if only for the one reason that we shall not become involved in war unless one of those two countries first becomes involved.

3. *Canada should, as a general rule, occupy a back seat at Geneva or elsewhere when European or Asiatic problems are being discussed.*

The main purpose of this "back seat" policy is to give Canada as much freedom of action as possible in the event of war by trying to ensure that Canada does not in advance, by her actions at Geneva or elsewhere, become involved in a "moral" obligation to send armed forces overseas to participate in war or in the application of other forms of force. She might well become involved in a "moral" obligation if her representatives at Geneva, London, or elsewhere were responsible for initiating a policy, which, when adopted by other nations, led to war. In December, 1935, for example, it was possible that the application of an oil sanction against Italy might have led to war. The risk was perhaps worth running, and Canada was prepared to join with other nations in imposing an oil sanction. But she was not prepared to involve herself in advance in an obligation to send armed forces overseas to participate in war. The Canadian government, therefore, made it clear that Dr. Riddell's proposal on oil sanctions "was not the Canadian government's proposal,

but that it was simply the proposal of an individual member of a committee."[2] If the Canadian government had not done that, it would have been held responsible for initiating the oil sanction, and if war had ensued from its application, many people both inside and outside Canada would have held that Canada was under a "moral," though not a legal, obligation to send armed forces overseas to participate in that war.

If one believes that the Canadian parliament or people should, if war breaks out, be as free as possible from "moral" obligations to participate, so that they may be able to decide for themselves in the light of all the circumstances at the time whether or not they should participate, then one must be in favour of the "back-seat" policy.

Another argument in favour of the "back-seat" policy is that a "front-seat" policy would do us harm and the world no good. "Any general war [in Europe] would be a calamity to civilization that would drag us downward with that part of the world from which we sprang; but in the present aspect of affairs we cannot help to prevent it, for it rests upon conditions there which we cannot change, upon the inability of European nations to act with harmony enough to settle their dissensions by peaceful means."[3] Lawrence Lowell's statement about the inability of the United States to exert any serious constructive influence in Europe to-day applies with much greater force to Canada.

4 and 5. *Canada is under no obligation to participate in the economic and military sanctions of the League or in the defence of any other part of the Commonwealth.*

The main argument in favour of this policy is the

[2] *Debates of the House of Commons, Canada*, Feb. 11, 1936, p. 110.

[3] A. Lawrence Lowell, "Alternatives before the League" (*Foreign Affairs*, Oct., 1936, pp. 109-10).

desirability, under present international and domestic conditions, of Canada's keeping a free hand, so that she can, if she wants to, refrain from intervening in an overseas war. She obviously will have tied her hands in advance if she is legally committed to participate, in certain circumstances, in the sanctions of the League or in the defence of the Commonwealth.

The argument for the free hand is in large measure domestic. Canada must be able to pick and choose between the various types of war in which she may be invited to take part. There are certain conceivable wars in which for Canada to take part would be to invite almost certain civil war. Participation in other sorts of war might not so seriously endanger Canadian unity. Of late the foreign policy of the Vatican seems to be growing increasingly pro-fascist and anti-communist. Certainly dominant groups in French Canada seem increasingly to be flirting with fascism and becoming more embittered against communism. Four out of every ten Canadians are Roman Catholics. Three of those four Roman Catholics are French. What would this forty per cent. of the Canadian population and fascist sympathizers in English-speaking Canada do if a Canadian government decided to participate actively on the side of communist Russia and "socialist" France against fascist Germany, Austria, and Italy? Many of them would certainly not be convinced by the argument that the war was not a war "between economic systems, between social philosophies, . . . between religious faiths,"[4] but was instead a war in defence of the rule of law, the collective system, or the British Empire.

[4]League of Nations Assembly, Sept. 29, 1936, Verbatim record, p. 2. Speech by Mr. Mackenzie King.

The possibility of maintaining the national unity of Canada demands that the Canadian government be under no *obligation* to participate in the application of force overseas.

6. *Before the Canadian government agrees in future to participate in military or economic sanctions or in war, the approval of the parliament or people of Canada will be secured.*

Since the question of participation by Canada in war or in other forms of force is a matter of life and death to many Canadian citizens, to their friends and families, it would seem only right that the citizen or his representative in parliament should, if possible, be consulted before the government takes positive action. The pledge to consult parliament or the people is obviously not intended to apply to the remote contingency of an armed attack on the territory of a neutral Canada. In such circumstances the Canadian government would certainly not wait till parliament were convened before taking steps to repel the invader by force of arms.

Using this as an analogy, critics of parliamentary or popular control over declarations of war say that the Canadian cabinet should also be prepared to shoulder the responsibility for immediate armed intervention overseas. They argue that if we are going to intervene at all we should intervene at the beginning of the war when our assistance would be of most value. Some, indeed, go so far as to say that since the war will be short and sharp, our only chance of helping our allies will be to intervene immediately with as much force as we can bring to bear. To advocate this in Canada comes close to advocating irresponsible government. If a major war broke out involving Great Britain—and this is the war which we all

have in mind—it is most unlikely that any Canadian cabinet would be unanimous in favour of immediate armed intervention on the largest possible scale. A substantial number of cabinet ministers would resign if the majority tried to put such a decision through. The cabinet would have to be re-formed. Until it met parliament and received a vote of confidence, no one could be certain that it had the support of a majority in the House of Commons and was therefore able to continue in office without a new election. It is possible that the following series of events might take place: the interventionist majority in the cabinet sends Canadian armed forces to Europe; it convenes parliament to ratify its decision; it is defeated in parliament; it dissolves the House; it is defeated in the general election; and it is succeeded by a non-interventionist government, which immediately recalls the Canadian troops.

That is not a pleasant prospect. For one thing the passions of the opposition during the election would be raised to white heat by the thought that Canadian troops had been sent to Europe by a government which did not have the confidence of parliament, and that at the very moment the election was taking place those Canadian troops were being killed. In equal measure the withdrawal of Canadian troops by the new Canadian government would infuriate the supporters of intervention.

A debate in the Canadian House of Commons, or a general election, to decide the question of participation in war would be a nasty business calculated to strain Canadian unity almost to the breaking point. A debate or an election to ratify the action of a government which had already sent Canadian troops overseas, would be an even nastier business provided, as is likely, there were a substantial number of the Canadian people opposed to inter-

vention. It might well strain Canadian unity to the breaking point.

A compromise policy is, of course, possible. A Canadian government might say that it was prepared to participate in economic sanctions without securing the approval of the parliament or people of Canada. This was, in fact, the policy followed by Mr. Mackenzie King, in October, 1935, in respect of the application of economic sanctions against Italy. This is the policy which Mr. King, in view of his experience during the Italo-Abyssinian crisis, has decided to give up. One of his reasons appears to be that economic sanctions and military sanctions are very similar in that they are both means by which one state (or group of states) endeavours to impose its will on another state. A sharp distinction between the two is therefore unwarranted. Secondly, the application of effective economic sanctions may lead to war. Whether economic sanctions "will progress into military measures is not necessarily within the control of the powers that impose them; that may depend on the calculation of advantage and disadvantage made by those against whom the test of will is directed."[5] To participate in economic sanctions is thus to participate in what may be the initial stages of war. Participation in the initial stages of war renders more difficult non-participation in the war that may follow. Therefore, if parliamentary or popular control over questions of participation in war is to be real and effective, it must apply equally to economic and to military sanctions.

7. *Canada is willing to participate in international inquiries into international economic grievances.*

Certainly if the danger of war is to be lessened the

[5] *Debates of the House of Commons, Canada*, June 18, 1936, p. 4187.

economic grievances of the dissatisfied powers must be investigated, regardless of whether, to begin with, we believe that there is, or is not, an economic basis for those grievances. It would be hard to find any intelligent person who would criticize Mr. King for going too far when he declared in the House of Commons last June: "Inquire we should into any question, raw materials, population movements, labour conditions, that is felt as a grievance. . . . Within the measure of our power we must pursue the attempt to bring international trade gradually back to a sane basis, to lessen the throttling controls and barriers."[6]

An examination of the seven points of Mr. King's foreign policy thus demonstrates (to one critic at least) how well each point, taken by itself, is suited to present conditions. But the adequacy of the policy as a whole is a different matter. Mr. King has certainly not provided an answer to many pressing questions about Canada's foreign policy. It will be sufficient to indicate what some of these questions are.

1. He has said that Canada is under no *obligation* to participate in war or in other forms of force. He has not stated whether he is in favour of Canada's participating in certain circumstances and to a certain extent—and if so, in what circumstances and to what extent.

2. He has pledged himself to consult the parliament *or* people of Canada before his government agrees to participate in war or in other forms of force. He has not let us know whether it is to be parliament or the people, and if the people, whether by general election or by plebiscite.

3. He must envisage the possibility of a great war in which neither the United Kingdom nor Canada is en-

[6] *Debates of the House of Commons, Canada*, June 18, 1936, pp. 4195-6.

gaged. In such a war what sort of neutrality policy is he in favour of Canada's pursuing: the old-fashioned neutrality of trying to sell as much as possible at as high a price as possible to as many belligerents as possible; or the new-fashioned neutrality of embargoes on the export of arms and munitions to all belligerents, and on the public floating of loans by all belligerents?

4. If he envisages the possibility of Canada's taking no active part in a great war involving the United Kingdom, does he favour a state of passive belligerency for Canada or one of complete neutrality[7]—and if complete neutrality, is it to be old-fashioned or new-fashioned neutrality?

5. He has emphasized the fact that Canada's relations with the United States are of great importance. He has not said whether, if a great war breaks out in which the United States is neutral, Canada is going to co-operate with the United States in an attempt to ensure that the purpose of its neutrality legislation is not frustrated. Nor has he given any inkling of what he would recommend Canada's doing if the United States should become involved in a war with Japan.

6. And just because he has not answered all these questions he is unable to define what Canadian defence policy he favours.

7. He has said that he favours Canadian participation in international inquiries into international economic grievances. He has not indicated how far his government might be willing to modify Canadian policies in the light of the recommendations made by such international inquiries.

[7]For a statement of some of the difficulties in the way of either alternative see P. E. Corbett, "Isolation for Canada?" (QUARTERLY, VI, Oct., 1936, 120-31). [EDITOR'S NOTE]

Mr. King has put forward a seven-point foreign policy. If he wants to give the Canadian people a fairly complete picture of his foreign policy, he will have to emulate President Wilson and give us a fourteen-point programme. But if Mr. King were to give unambiguous answers to the seven questions he has left unanswered, he would raise a tremendous political storm in Canada. Parties would split. Passions would be aroused. The national unity of Canada would be subjected to severe strains. If war should break out, such a crisis will probably be inevitable. It is human not to wish to hasten the arrival of the inevitable, if the inevitable is unpleasant—and perhaps dangerous.

The argument in favour of provoking the crisis now instead of waiting, is much the same as the argument for the "preventive" war. A crisis now would settle the question, and as a result there would be no crisis of any importance when war did break out. A crisis to-day would not be as severe as a crisis during a war. In other words, a crisis to-day would be a "preventive" crisis. But democracies and democratic statesmen hate both preventive wars and preventive crises.

SOCIAL INSURANCE AND POLITICS

L. RICHTER

SOCIAL INSURANCE and similar devices for social security have become of increasing importance in Canadian politics. During the last Federal election when the depression was still more seriously felt than at present, unemployment insurance was one of the planks of the Conservative platform. If it did not prove successful it was for the simple (but paradoxical) reason that nobody liked to oppose or even to criticize the proposal, though the Employment and Social Insurance Bill was certainly open to some criticism.[1] So strong was the popular feeling for that form of social insurance that the bill of the Bennett government was unanimously passed in parliament. There could, therefore, be no doubt that after the Supreme Court by a majority decision had declared the Act unconstitutional, the government of Mr. Mackenzie King would have to appeal the decision, whatever the opinion of the government's legal advisers on the possible outcome.

The same tendency can be observed in the field of provincial legislation. Old age pensions played a major part in the last Quebec election. The first pensions, a benefit long enjoyed in other provinces, were paid out during the election campaign. Workmen's compensation acts providing insurance against industrial accidents are continually being improved, and bills for that purpose are generally carried by very large majorities. More divided is political opinion about the usefulness of health insurance. While in Alberta an Act Respecting Health Insurance was

[1]See my article, "The Employment and Social Insurance Bill: General Principles and European Experience" (*Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, I, Aug., 1935, pp. 436 *ff.*).

written on the statute books in the spring of 1935 without receiving much public attention, a veritable war was waged last spring in British Columbia about the provincial Health Insurance Act. Newspapers campaigned, parties split, and though the bill was finally carried it was only at the price of many sacrifices and much compromise. It seems, therefore, desirable to examine the rôle that social insurance plays in politics since this relationship is of more than theoretic interest at the present time.

Social insurance has been defined as insurance against revolution. There is more of wit than accuracy in the description. Germany, a country famous for its social insurance, has undergone two revolutions in the last fifteen years, and other countries by adopting measures of social insurance have not been able to save themselves from serious internal disorders. But the epigram contains the germ of a truth. To an extent far greater, perhaps, than any other institution, social insurance is adapted to equalize those social tensions which may become dangerous to the state. Moreover, it gives a feeling of security to those classes which, in consequence of the smallness of their income, cannot make sufficient provision for the future: they know that in the vicissitudes of life provision has been made for them. This knowledge frees them from anxiety and inspires them with confidence. Furthermore, it prepares them to become reconciled to many aspects of a social order which would otherwise appear to them wholly or partly unwarrantable.

It is not true, as is often stated, that Bismarck introduced social insurance into Germany in order to alienate votes from the Socialists. This step had its origin in Bismarck's idea of the state. He was influenced by a conception based on ethico-religious and feudal considerations. He believed it to be the duty of the Christian

state of the kind that he envisaged, to guarantee to the working classes protection of their personal rights as these rights were adapted to the conditions of the industrial age. He aimed to restore, in an appropriate form, that protection which in cases of emergency the feudal landlord had extended to his labourers. That the worker would in this way be attracted to the state, and estranged from the parties opposed to it, was to be a by-product of the policy, not its real motive as the Socialists supposed. At the time they were in strong opposition to the government; it was the period of the anti-Socialist law which resulted in severe persecution of the followers of Karl Marx. Any measure calculated to weaken the idea of class-warfare was necessarily unpopular with the Socialists. This resulted in a peculiar situation: social insurance was introduced into Germany against the expressed wishes of those who then represented the working classes. In the course of time their attitude has, of course, been completely altered. After 1919, Socialism was the strongest guardian and champion of social insurance. There was then no party in the German parliament which was opposed to it in principle, although many controversies arose concerning its limits and methods. The same may be said of the British parliament. In both countries social insurance had become indispensable: its right to exist was proved beyond all doubt. A systematic opposition to the idea of social insurance has been found in recent times only in the French parliament—especially from the agricultural representatives. Parliamentary discussion of the government's projects has lasted there for almost ten years. However, in France, too, the idea has finally been triumphant, even though the original plans have had to be drastically curtailed.

The present systems of social insurance in Europe,

despite their similarity of purpose, exhibit marked differences in details. Insurance must adapt itself to the economic and social conditions of each country. Fascist Italy lays stress upon its desire to promote increase of population and the idea of the corporative society. It has made its corporations the pillars of its insurance. National Socialism in Germany has not adopted this policy since its assumption of power, although a certain inclination towards it seemed at first to exist. In conformity with its creed, it has replaced the democratic principle of self-government, which up to that time had guided social insurance, by the National Socialist principle of leadership. The English system, with its uniform contributions and benefits, is simpler, and more boldly conceived, than the German, which tends to over-differentiation, and in its efforts to achieve exact justice often overcomplicates. Again in their emphasis on the collectivist idea of a reconciliation and equalization of various interests, the English and German laws differ from French legislation, which reflects the individualism of the French farmer: nobody must obtain anything at the expense of others, and, above all, industry must not profit at the expense of agriculture. No objections, however, were raised against a subsidy for agricultural insurance. These examples might be multiplied at will—and indeed it would be an attractive task, to study popular psychology from the point of view of social policy.

But, in spite of all the different forms under which it appears, certain fixed principles are still to be found, identical for all recognized and successful systems of social insurance. These principles cannot be neglected without endangering the purpose which social insurance is designed to serve. Legislators who have tried to disregard them have been disillusioned, and to their sorrow, have

had to return to the old truths. They are simple truths, but they are not always convenient, popular, or easy to realize.

It is a self-evident requirement that every system of social insurance have a sound financial basis—that the revenue permanently cover the expenditure. What would one say of a private insurance company that got into difficulties because its premiums were not high enough or because it had calculated the risks at too low a level? The high standard of actuarial science, which can draw up reliable tariffs to cover even the most unusual risks, very rarely permits such things to happen in private insurance.

In social insurance, however, the case is very different. In many European countries its budget after a comparatively short time has shown a considerable deficit, so that governments have been compelled to come forward with loans and subsidies, and even with this aid the benefits to the insured have had to be reduced. These deplorable occurrences are not due to any lack of expert actuarial advice: at the time of the establishment of the insurance systems the finances are, as a rule, thoroughly sound. The trouble begins as soon as, under political influence, the actuarial bases of insurance are altered without, and against, the advice of the actuaries. For every system of social insurance becomes in the course of its development a political factor of the first rank. The insured are at the same time voters, and indeed they represent a large and influential group of voters, which no government likes to antagonize.

In those countries where insurance embraces the sick, the aged, the widows and orphans, together with the unemployed and the victims of industrial accidents, it has become one of the most important factors in the social life

of the nation, and in the private life of the individual. It is preponderantly compulsory, *i.e.*, the state compels the individual to contribute, even against his will. It is supervised, if not administered, by civic authorities, and is usually endowed by the state. Therefore, what is more to be expected than that politicians should try to bring influence to bear upon insurance, and make "improvements," in the interest of their insured constituents?

The history of social insurance in Europe is filled with examples of this development. There is indeed a striking similarity in its various national manifestations. Where unemployment insurance is concerned, the duration of the "dole" is always further extended because governments shrink from delivering up the unemployed to public assistance. So far have they gone in this respect in England and Germany, that the essential character of insurance has been almost lost, and one may more accurately speak of *a public fund with compulsory contributions from the employer and the employee.* In the case of insurance for the aged, and for widows and orphans, the groups of those entitled to benefits have been permanently enlarged within the last decade both in England and Germany; but no corresponding contributions have been demanded to balance the benefits conceded. In Germany the benefits, which following the inflation period had to be fixed very low on account of the loss of nearly all the reserves, were considerably increased in the years 1926-9, because the parliament regarded the apparent improvement of those years as a genuine recovery and hoped for still further increases in future contributions. Moreover, political controversies which have nothing directly to do with social policy, have been waged on that battlefield. Thus once in the German parliament a majority was won for a very unpopular increase of the duties on foodstuffs by ear-

marking definite sums from the customs revenue for the purposes of social insurance. In France, where the agricultural representatives had for years blocked all social insurance bills, a law was made feasible only by considerable grants to the agricultural branch of social insurance.

The strong influence which parliaments have exercised on the development of social insurance is due to its great political and social significance, but also to the fact that in most countries considerable subsidies are granted to insurance from the state's resources. Annually these subsidies give parliament an opportunity to concern itself with insurance.

That the state should make contributions to social insurance is in itself thoroughly justified. In aiding a fund for the insurance of the sick, it pursues a policy similar to the creation of an institution of public health. In the report accompanying the provincial government's plan of health insurance for British Columbia, it was explained that in future subsidies would go to the insurance fund instead of to hospitals and similar institutions, because they, in their turn, would henceforth be partially financed by the fund.[2] Subsidies to unemployment and old-age insurance, which make possible the granting of sufficient benefits and pensions, tend to reduce the cost of public assistance, in the raising of which the state directly or indirectly has a share. And quite generally we may say that the modern state is so deeply interested in the efficient assistance of the economically weak sections of the population that this would appear a sufficient justification for government grants in aid of social insurance.

But certain limits are set to the subsidizing activities of the state. According to its origin and essential motive,

[2]The part of the bill providing for such subsidies has, however, not been incorporated in the final act.

social insurance is a self-supporting institution based upon mutual assistance. This character is not lost because participation is made compulsory by the state. In the same way, a society of fruit-growers does not cease to be a co-operative institution because, by reason of the Marketing Act, outsiders can be forcibly included. On the other hand, the "self-help" character of the institution is destroyed if too great a part of the fund is raised, not by the insured and their employers, but by the state. The reluctance of the insured to apply for benefits from the insurance fund will be the greater the more deeply they are concerned in the raising of the fund and the less the responsibility is taken over from them by the state. The objection may be urged, that what is true of state contributions applies also to contributions from employers. That objection, however, is not valid, as experience in Europe has shown. The insured is inclined to look upon the contribution which his employer makes for him, as a part of his wages, while state subsidy is for him a public fund from which one must endeavour to obtain as much as possible. This is one of the psychological factors which play a great part in social insurance.

Politicians have not always shown sufficient understanding of the importance of this factor. In prosperous times they have voted for an increase of state subsidies in order to make themselves popular with their constituents by an increase of the benefits. Such amendments have been very frequent in Europe, particularly before elections or before the Christmas recess, and have sometimes been decided upon even against the desire of the government.

During the depression parliaments have inclined still to maintain the benefits of insurance, even though no longer justified by the financial basis of the system. When the insurance fund becomes incapable of supplying the

current benefits, state funds are set aside for this purpose. During the depression in Germany, and even in England, these grants in the field of unemployment insurance have assumed enormous proportions. In Germany pension insurance of miners has been maintained for a number of years only by large subsidies. The inducements to this policy are easily understood. For there is nothing which would more quickly make a government unpopular than to curtail the benefits of insurance. Hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people are concerned, who for the most part stand on the very margin of subsistence, and hence, would suffer real deprivation if insurance benefits were curtailed. Moreover, because of their contributions, the insured believe that they have a claim to the benefits at the old rate. It is well known what indignation the reduction of aid to the unemployed caused in England in 1931. In Germany the very drastic impairment of insurance benefits on which the Bruning regime had to decide, contributed in no small measure to its being forced out of office.

Experience in England, as well as in Germany, has shown how dangerous it is for those responsible for an insurance scheme to abandon sound actuarial principles. The great reform laws which were introduced in England in 1934, in the field of unemployment insurance, and in Germany in the field of old-age and invalid-pension insurance, aimed to restore the supremacy of these principles. If they are maintained, insurance will be in a position to honour all its obligations in times of depression. In order to preserve its stability every effort must be made to keep it free from any political influence. For this purpose various expedients have already been tried in the past. In Germany, whenever parliament voted increased expenditure for social purposes, it had also at the same time

to take steps (which were usually unsuccessful, however) to raise the necessary money by additional taxation or by economy. England in 1934 took another way. The minister of labour was empowered to appoint, for a five-year term, a statutory committee to supervise the finances of the Unemployment Fund, this committee to consist of persons not in parliament and to be named after some consultation with organizations of employers and employees. At the end of each financial year it is to present to the minister of labour a report, which he must lay before parliament within two months. The committee may, however, report to the minister during the course of the year if, in its opinion, the financial situation of the Fund gives ground for apprehension. The report must contain proposals as to how the financial equilibrium of the Fund can best be restored by a change of law. (It will be in the main a question of reducing benefits and stiffening the conditions for granting them.) The minister is to supplement this report to parliament with the draft of an order which either accepts the proposals of the committee or carries into effect by a further change of law the economies deemed necessary by it. If the minister, in the draft of an order, adopts the latter alternative, he must justify his choice before parliament. If parliament approves of the draft, the minister is to publish the order.

By this arrangement various purposes are served. The finances of insurance are continually supervised by experts who are independent both of parliament and administration. The duty of the experts is to warn parliament and the public whenever the financial equilibrium of insurance is threatened. They relieve parliament of a thankless task, and one from which it is glad to escape, the task of making proposals for reorganization, which, in the circumstances, can only limit the rights of the insured. In the

catalogue of changes which the committee has power to propose—they are contained in a special schedule attached to the law—no provisions are found for the granting of state funds in the form of subsidies or loans. The committee can, therefore, propose only that insurance reorganize itself by itself without the help of outside support. On the other hand, in its proposals to parliament, the government is bound to comply with the suggestions of a body standing outside both parliament and government. From the point of view of political science this is a very interesting anomaly. The fact that the government can, in some details, deviate from the proposals of the committee, is not of much importance, because the government is limited to the catalogue of changes allowed to the committee. The government, accordingly, cannot in the draft of an order propose any increase in the state subsidy. The aim is to make it as difficult as possible for parliament to evade a genuine reorganization of insurance. To do so, it would have to disregard not only the opinions of the experts, but also the proposals of the government.

The Canadian government has followed the English model in the Employment and Social Insurance Act and has established the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee (s. 16 of the Act). Mr. Bennett has called this committee the "watch-dog" of the Insurance Fund. But this watch-dog has not quite such sharp teeth as his English brother. According to the Canadian law, it is true, reports and proposals must be presented to parliament, as in England. But the government is not bound, as in England, to comply with these proposals. It does not need to lay before parliament a draft of an order which accepts in principle the proposals of the committee. A Canadian government which has before it the task of reorganizing insurance, is under less constraint than an

English; for it does not have to defend in parliament the proposals of the advisory committee. It will be more apt to hesitate on political and tactical grounds before bringing forward a draft corresponding to these proposals; it will be more exposed to political pressure than under the English plan. Finally, it is simpler for a parliament that does not want to make itself unpopular, to disregard the warnings of a report than to accept the responsibility of rejecting a government draft.

Another way to free social insurance from undue political influence is to have it administered, not by a government department, but by a commission. Members of such a commission are either appointed experts (civil servants with long administrative experience, medical men in the case of health insurance, officers of employment exchanges in the case of unemployment insurance) or representatives of the groups whom the insurance scheme is meant to serve, that is, of the employers and employees. The Federal Employment and Social Insurance Act, as well as the Health Insurance Acts of Alberta and British Columbia, provide for such commissions. The new and important feature of commissions, whether or not they are entrusted with the sole administration of insurance, is that they are endowed with powers which hitherto used to be the prerogative of the legislator. The Employment and Social Insurance Commission (which will be called upon to administer unemployment insurance in Canada, if the Act should be found constitutional by the Privy Council) has indeed very large powers. It can increase or decrease benefits; it can introduce new types of benefit; it can even include new groups in the insurance scheme or exclude others. No objections seem to have arisen about these wide powers, which, by the way, are also enjoyed by its model, the British Employment

Insurance Commission. But great indignation was aroused when a very modest part of these powers was to be transferred to the British Columbia Health Insurance Commission, set up to administer the provincial Health Insurance Act. One of the chief objections was to the commission's power to regulate the conditions of the medical service. Mistrust has succeeded in abolishing other powers given to the commission in the original draft bill and already enjoyed by similar commissions in the old country. Most unfortunately these questions have been dragged into the political arena, and their solution made a matter of expediency.

New incentives for further social legislation in Canada may be expected as soon as Mr. Roosevelt's Social Security Acts start operation in the United States. Owing to the close social and economic connections existing between the two countries, this development is likely to be reflected in Canada and to give social insurance a still greater prominence in Canadian politics.

THE SCHOLAR AND THE CRITIC: AN ESSAY IN MEDIATION

AUSTIN WARREN

WORDS survive many changes of connotation; and "scholarship" and "criticism" are by no means unambiguous. The former once betokened wide as well as exact erudition. Till the end of the seventeenth century, one could still say, "I take all knowledge for my province;" and Aristotle, Aquinas, and Bacon may serve as types of this polymath. The learned man of England's Golden Age, the Browne or Burton or Evelyn—even Ussher or Selden—boasted no rigorous specialization. He did not surrender his days to the mastery of a single theme or the exposition of a single dead author—"a life for a life;" but, like the wise man of Confucius' stipulation, he was *ad omnia paratus*.

Our contemporary scholar need not be an erudite. Even if he specializes in one of the national literatures, he may be ignorant—or well-nigh—of the classical languages and the works of imagination and wisdom written in them. He is a constituted scholar in virtue not of wide attainments but of his training in method and his intensive concentration. He has heard and obeyed the precept: *Divide et impera*. A learned man he may be as well: the great scholars of our day assuredly are. But he is enrolled in his caste by token of his specialization and his technique.

The *savant* of the past and the scholar, even of the scantest dimensions, have, nevertheless, this in common: that their province is the fact—the ascertainment of such truth as belongs to the scientific and historical rather than the philosophical order.

And similarly with criticism. The neo-classicist, who

judges the creative work of his day by reference to the standards of the ancients and the immutable "laws of poetry;" the impressionist, who judges, "Such a book I, with my refined sensibilities, relish—hence approve, and recommend to others who possess my delicate neurological constitution without my reading or my power of articulation;" the Marxian, who judges authors in terms of their attitude toward the class-struggle: all unite in pronouncing estimates of value.

Since these two realms are divided only by line, what wonder that they have ever been at war? The scholar views the critic as a sophist who asserts out of ignorance and arrogance; to which the critic counters by dubbing the scholar a pedant who knows but does not comprehend, who regards one old fact as significant as another, whose "literary" work is mere cutting and pasting, and who, forever reading, will certainly never be read—except by his patient colleagues, engaged at the same despicable craft.

To these mutual recriminations it would be easy and amiable, but unprofitable, to reply in the spirit of what currently passes for tolerance; it would be equally easy, but cowardly, to align oneself, in a purely professional or partisan spirit, with one or the other of the belligerents. The rôle of conciliator is ever as ungrateful as necessary. And to propose even the most modest scheme of values lays one open, in this time of scepticism among the erudites, to the charge of presumption. Nevertheless, if there be a *universe*, and not a chaos or a pluralism, then a man must set himself resolutely in search of its order, and must construct, for himself at least, a tentative hierarchy of values in that smaller world (presumably representative of the larger cosmos) in which he lives and functions.

What, then, is the province of literary scholarship? It has developed, one may say, to furnish a humanistic equivalent to the physical sciences, and, like them, concerns itself with what can be known exactly and with certainty. Definable as research in the "natural history" of literature, it applies itself to studies paralleling history, scientifically conceived, and to investigating such truth as is approximately measurable. Investigations of the genesis and evolution of the genres, of versification, of "sources" and "influences" (proved by lists of "parallel passages"), of stage history and acting, of widely prevalent themes (the unicorn, sadism, romantic melancholy), of literary biography (dates of births, deaths, marriages; genealogies), of literary chronology (establishment of editions and impressions), of social and philosophical backgrounds: these may serve as characteristic types of scholarly operation. The conditions under which, the materials upon which, the writer worked: these exact research can elucidate.

Of such studies there can be no end. Everything bears some relation to everything else; and it can always be maintained that one cannot understand a particular author, for instance, without reference to his whole circumambience, his whole natural and intellectual history. All knowledge is proximate. In our own day, literary scholars have taken full advantage of this latitude to invade all manner of outlying terrains and have published historical works only remotely connected with *belles-lettres*. For this they have been rebuked; but, granted the current conception of scholarship, there seems possible no really effective protest. We can say, indeed, that the *teacher* of literature should be primarily concerned with literature, and especially with the masterpieces; we can further postulate that he ought to be a

man of knowledge, of taste, and of critical judgment. But if we abstract the problem of how the scholar is to be supported, and forget that he customarily earns his living by instructing adolescents, then we must say that his "contribution to knowledge" is a "contribution" whatever its terrain, and that the only test which we can apply is his competence as a specialist and methodologist.

Fact, then, is the primary concern of the scholar; value, of the critic. Now all men are critics in the largest sense, for all men make judgments of value, if only by expressing preferences. The familiar amateur who assures us, "I don't know much about music, but I know what I like," and who goes on, without undue timidity, to tell us what he likes, is a critic, even though he gives expression to the taste of what Arnold would call his "raw self;" and the amateur is seldom modest enough to feel his preference purely personal: his implication is universal. Likewise the scholar is necessarily a critic, *malgré lui*; for, though he may hold to the mystic faith that any contribution to knowledge is important, or even to that belief in the equipollence of all facts which is the modern substitute for the dogma of Plenary Inspiration, he nevertheless implies an axiology when he elects to investigate this theme rather than that, when he decides that this monograph is worth four years' work, this "note" two months'. Still, the scholar's evaluation consists chiefly in that weighing of evidence necessary to the discovery of the "fact"—or, what is sometimes its nearest approach, the probability. He does not deem it his office to characterize, still less to appraise, the worth of his author's style, the soundness of his moral or philosophical attitudes (as estimated with reference either to hypothetically absolute standards or to the scholar's own admittedly private hierarchy of values), his stature

relative to that of the other commanding figures in the national literature to which he belongs or in the pantheon of comparative letters.

Since scholarship is occupied with establishing the "facts," it follows that it primarily concerns itself with the past. Only after an author is dead can we call his "case" closed; only after his relatives and friends have published their memoirs and, in turn, departed this life, can all the documents be humanly available, the full biographical truth be avowed, and the *post-mortem* pronounced. Only then can the "full" bibliography be compiled. And, too, scholarship deals with the past *as* the past: at most, it interprets the man in his own setting, in the light of his own time. The scholar offers what Arnold calls the "historical estimate;" he does not attempt to pronounce the verdict either of the present or the eternal.

But all criticism, all judgment of values, is dated "to-day," even when it speaks in the name of the Absolute. It seeks to rescue from the past that which is necessary to the present—to preserve or restore to the canon of living writers those of the technically dead whom we spare at our peril; to save the modern reader time for the true classics by decrying that which is not in its kind first-rate or not of first-rate kind. Even the humblest of critics, the reviewer, fails of his function if he does not distinguish the more significant from the less: his work need not and should not be purely expository. Into critical quarterlies, even a denunciatory review is not admissible unless the book thus to be condemned is "important;" the critic separates not only the good from the bad but the significantly bad from the worthless.

The literary historian may content himself with tracing the rise and fall of reputations, with interpreting

authors, groups, and movements in their own contexts, allowing them wraith-like existence in the Hades of the Past. But the critic cannot remain satisfied with an estimate of "historical importance." It is his hazardous function to assay the past with this criterion: What still matters? What is still relevant? What still lives?

"Surely a time will soon come when all is known that is in the least worth reading for its own sake, and when much that is unearthed will again disappear." Oliver Elton speaks temperately. It would be absurd to say that most men, in any age, are in much danger of seeing their homesteads surrendered to the increasing acreage of mausoleum and cemetery; and certainly, except with snobbish and jingoistic cults, ancestor-worship plays but little part in modern life. Indeed the majority of American college graduates disclaim their proferred share in civilization simply because they are so abyssmally unaware of the significant past; "modern" and emancipated, they are yet as unenlightened as smug. But the minority of thoughtful persons, those who see that to-day cannot be understood except in the light of the past, are in danger of accepting a heavier and heavier burden of erudition, till they lose their native powers of evaluation and forget their original motive of knowing in order to understand and to apply. The critic must resolutely resist this danger, or he loses his utility. Without adequate background, he can never transcend journalism; but without consciousness of a foreground in which men live and act he remains an *érudit*.

Thus far we have been distinguishing the scholar and the critic. The scholar has been assigned the fact; the critic, the value. And the supposition has been that the scholar supplies the facts upon which the critic bases his evaluations. This, in the contemporary world, might

well mean that before he writes the critic should know not only the *opera* of the author he is to discuss, but the most recent scholarly monographs, and perhaps articles, which have been devoted to his subject. He need not be required to have scanned the last "note" in *Modern Language Notes* or the last "letter" to the *Times Literary Supplement*; but if he has studied the latest academic volume (which will incorporate refutation of positive error in the publications of preceding specialists), he cannot err egregiously with respect to the data upon which he works. Such procedure—obviously employed by Mr. T. S. Eliot, for one—is all too rare; it should be general among critics who pronounce upon the literary past.

But why should not the scholar be also a critic? May he not practise both disciplines, and, having mastered what is already known upon his subject and having, by his researches, extended that knowledge, then apply himself with equal seriousness to the task of criticism?

Many of the older American scholars, it appears, view with avowed dismay that distrust of generalizations which is current among their junior colleagues. They themselves still venture beyond "note" and check-list, undeterred by fear of the subjective. They regret that the younger men forsake literary for sociological history. And they sincerely desire that research shall move forward to the goal of synthesis and interpretation. To such purpose Dr. Lowes has recently pronounced; and in his own *Road to Xanadu* he has furnished us a masterpiece of its kind, a work in which extraordinarily laborious and recondite investigations are marshalled to a definite end—illustration of the creative process as it operates in the mind of the learned poet.

But interpretation, useful as it is and artistically

competent as its practitioner must be, is not criticism but a *tertium quid*. Catholic and impartial, it presents what can be said in behalf of every subject. Like an expensive lawyer, it can plead any case with practised persuasiveness, see every side. The interpreter speaks all languages with ease, and can translate from the distant into the near, from the past into the present. Owning no native vernacular, no attachment to nation or soil, he understands their idioms and their *mores*, and can instruct others to view them without prejudice. The interpreter is, in short, the professed liberal. Interpretation is the sympathetic exposition of the views held by others, the exegete's imaginative entrance into the mind and heart of his author.

If the scholar adjudges himself incompetent to judge, or believes, as the majority unquestionably do, that criticism is but impressionism and hence inappropriate to the dignity of academics, then let him assuredly tell us what pattern his facts compose for him, let him seek to occupy the House of the Interpreter.

But we are asking whether the scholar can also serve as critic. For such office he needs, it is true, the interpreter's powers, must "in every work regard the writer's end." But that is not enough. He must in addition possess range of reading, analytic incisivneess, vigour of judgment. Yet utmost longevity and industry will scarcely, in this day, enable a scholar to master more than a few authors or movements or periods. Does this mean that he may never speak as critic outside the scant province over which he presides as factual specialist; that, having made himself an authority on Milton, he may not, as critic, pen an essay on Racine, Tennyson, Walt Whitman, or James Joyce?

And there is the further, and perhaps more serious,

difficulty that, as critic, the scholar must transcend the bias his specialization may likely have bequeathed him. It is conceivable that a man should hold sovereignty over a subject and yet preserve detachment enough to view it in scale; but a form of errancy to which, as human beings, we are prone is the magnification of our special skills. For the "authority" on Goethe not to exaggerate the claims of his hero relative to the claims of Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare—that is difficult, normally impossible. Irving Babbitt has said: "Merely to master the special apparatus for the study of Dante and his times, the student, if he conforms to the standard set for the modern specialist, will run the risk of losing his intellectual symmetry and sense of proportion, precisely the qualities of which he will stand most in need for the higher interpretation of Dante." Can the scholar abstain from seeing his "King Charles's head" in the centre of the scene? If he cannot, he will mislead us as effectually as does any doctrinaire or journalist.

If he can preserve this desiderated sense of proportion, then his control of scientific procedure will stand him in excellent stead. A scholar knows how to test and approximately evaluate the worth of a monograph outside his own enclosure, for "scholarly method" is by way of becoming a standard commodity. And, further, to have himself touched factual bottom somewhere gives a man a permanent respect for the fact in its place, and should help to preserve him from loose generalization about subjects with which his acquaintance is slight. Many an enticing critical *aperçu* has been framed by ignorance and a vivid imagination. The scholar may prove too timorous an interpreter; but he will not speak where evidence is silent.

But should the scholar-critic prove unable to meet our

requirements, then, useful and admirable as he is, and fervently as we pray that his tribe may increase, he cannot take the place of the critic without hyphen, the man who possesses and combines a knowledge of ancient and modern literature, sensibility, judicial acuteness and balance, a comprehensive and sustained attitude. We stand in perpetual need of general ideas, discriminating surveys and syntheses, coherent estimates of art-history such as have, in the case of English poetry, been given us by Johnson, Arnold, and Mr. Eliot. We need definitions of ends and standards. We need to have literature correlated with the other arts, and with metaphysics, and with life. And, in needing these, we are but avowing our need of the critic.

Thus far, it must certainly be admitted, the great names in criticism, from Horace to Goethe, Sainte-Beuve, Coleridge, and Arnold, have been those not of scholars in the current sense, but of *honnêtes hommes*, men widely read, especially in the masterpieces, philosophic in temperament and attitude if not in technical discipline; and it seems probable that such will continue to be the case. But it must be seen that these men are scholars in the older sense, not journalists. The young man who has read nothing before 1900—or 1920—need not forever remain our critic; the pedant may well be excused from pre-empting the honourable name of scholar. A distinction may avoid developing into a dichotomy or a dualism. That our critics should base their estimates on as much knowledge as they can command without over-freighting their literary balance; that our men of learning should see their service in its relation to the whole intellectual life of society: surely these are not inordinate demands. As the critic becomes more informed and the scholar more philosophic, each will move towards the other, and

towards that *whole man* in whose equilibrium lies human perfection.

Disjecta membra, most of us—the eye crying out against the hand, and the head against the heart. Towards integration the individual must strive; but having done all, he must complete his meagre and disproportionate self by uniting it, in spiritual collectivism, to those fellow-labourers who, like him, reach towards the centre.

REVIEWS

PROFESSOR GILSON'S GIFFORD LECTURES*

VIRGIL MICHEL

The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy is the English translation of the Gifford Lectures delivered by Professor Gilson in the years 1931 and 1932. The lectures form a compact volume bearing out the thesis that the Middle Ages produced what can only be properly called a "Christian philosophy." In view of the controversies arising out of this term, the author in his preface raises the twofold question "whether, first, we can form the concept of a Christian philosophy, and secondly, whether medieval philosophy, in its best representatives at any rate, is not precisely its most adequate historical expression."

The general controversy that waxed hot after the first delivery of these lectures has probably ended among neo-scholastics in a unanimous acceptance of the position that, when taken formally, the terms "Christian" and "philosophy" are incompatible, the former necessarily denoting revealed doctrine and the latter precisely excluding it. While to-day the phrase "Christian sociology" is growing in use, and means a sociology inspired by and penetrated by the Christian faith, the analogous phrase of a "Christian philosophy" would be a contradiction in terms. No one is more ready to acknowledge this than M. Gilson himself: "Some are considering philosophy in itself, in its formal essence as philosophy. . . . In this sense it is clear that a philosophy cannot be Christian" (p. 36).

However, to justify the phrase, it must mean something more than a philosophy that is not out of harmony with the views of Christianity. There would be a justifiable meaning for the term, if "the influence of Christianity on philosophy was a reality," and this influence is evident even in such non-Christian philosophers as Descartes, Kant, and Leibniz (chapter I). Again, however, something more than a mere influence is wanted. There must be a more positive, intrinsic connection: "The content of Christian philosophy is that body of rational truths discovered, explored or simply safe-

**The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, by Etienne Gilson, Scribners, 1936. [It is unnecessary to remind most readers that Professor Gilson is Director of the Institute of Mediaeval Studies, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.]

guarded, thanks to the help that reason receives from revelation" (p. 35). In so far as Christian revelation has also given us truths that are open to discovery and understanding by natural reason, it may also furnish matter and inspiration for Christian philosophy. This is the author's thesis. "If it [Christian philosophy] is to deserve that name, the supernatural must descend as a constitutive element, not, of course, into its texture, which would be a contradiction, but into the work of its construction" (p. 37). The thesis becomes more definite in the following statement: "For whoever understands it thus, the concept does not correspond to any simple essence susceptible of abstract definition; but corresponds much rather to a concrete historical reality as something calling for description" (p. 37). Thus M. Gilson ultimately bevels the problem down to one of historical fact: "A true philosophy, taken absolutely and in itself, owes all its truth to its rationality and to nothing other than its rationality: that is indisputable, and St. Anselm and even St. Augustine would be the first to admit it. But the constitution of this true philosophy could not in fact be achieved without the aid of revelation, acting as an indispensable moral support to reason; that is equally certain from the standpoint of the Christian philosophers, and, as we have just seen, St. Thomas himself asserts it" (pp. 40-1).

Such is M. Gilson's thesis as expressed in the first two chapters of the present volume. The remaining chapters are an endeavour "to see how much truth there may be in this hypothesis" by examining "medieval thought in its nascent state, at that precise point, namely, where the Judeo-Christian graft was inserted into the Hellenic tradition" (Preface). This is done by an examination, in the manner proposed, of the basic concepts of the scholastic tradition: being, both necessary and contingent, analogy and causality, divine providence, and man and his nature, the intellect and knowledge, free will and moral obligation, and the like, ending with three chapters on the Middle Ages and nature, history, and philosophy, respectively.

In these chapters M. Gilson substantiates his thesis with a wealth of materials such as only an outstanding student of medieval thought and a keenly analytic mind could have selected and marshalled forth so tellingly. For the reviewer the astonishing thing is not the indubitable fact of the influence of the Christian revelation on philosophical speculation in the focusing of attention on definite

problems and the proposing of others, and also in the proposing of some solutions and the rejection of others. Does not any *Weltanschauung*, ardently espoused, have a similar influence on one's philosophy? Certainly the agnosticism of recent centuries, materialism, evolution as a complete view of life, and even rationalism itself, have been for many not so much the final conclusion of a carefully developed philosophical investigation, as the guiding star under whose influence some philosophical problems were rejected outright as non-existent or inane, and solutions to other problems were proposed with such assurance of certainty that denial or doubt of them was considered an evident sign of mental weakness. The astonishing fact is rather the extent of the positive contributions of Christianity to our philosophical heritage, which becomes evident in its fulness only when brought together in the manner of the lectures under review. They show forth both the virility and the independence of thought of medieval philosophers over against the still frequent view that theirs was but a feeble and eclectic accommodation of ideas and phrases out of Plato and Aristotle.

M. Gilson's book is much more than the historical working out of a thesis. It is at the same time an exposition of the best philosophical synthesis of medieval scholasticism. The author says too modestly in his preface: "If, very occasionally, a more theoretical attitude is provisionally adopted, it is merely because an historian who deals with ideas is bound at least to make them intelligible to his readers." These words give no indication of the definite value of the volume as an exposition of the main lines of medieval philosophy.

There now exist many volumes of the size of the one under review, which purport definitely to give an exposition of the scholastic synthesis or of Thomistic philosophy. The reviewer knows none that he would prefer to the present one for freshness and vitality of presentation. To him the usual atmosphere of the purely academic seems absent in M. Gilson's lectures, and some chapters in particular are outstanding for the poignancy and conviction with which their matter is presented, and the fresh stimulation they give to topics so often dealt with before. Among such chapters are those dealing with so hackneyed a topic as the Thomistic arguments for the existence of God, the analogy of being, freedom, the principle of individuation, the problem of evil and Christian optimism, and the contribution in the chapter on "Love and Its Object."

It would be quite unfair to make too much of what is to-day a definite and deplorable lacuna from the standpoint of complete synthesis, for the book does not claim primarily to be a synthesis. Far too many works, certainly the great majority, that propose to give a summary of Thomistic thought fail even to mention the ideas that come under the general heading of social ethics or social philosophy. In our own day, when vital thinking is concerned above all with this question, the lacuna is as self-condemnatory in professed works of synthesis as it is unintelligible. Just for this reason a chapter on the medieval conception of the relation of man to society and to the common good, the purpose of civil authority and organization, the place of ownership in human life, its rights as well as duties, its social aspects above all, the duties of rulers towards their subjects, the purpose of economic activity in individual life and in public social life, would have been almost a unique contribution. And from the pen of M. Gilson especially, developed with the breadth and the freshness of the present book, it would have been invaluable. May one hope that the mention of this need may induce the learned author to undertake a separate monograph on the subject? It would surely be making amends for the neglect of many of his predecessors, besides being a real contribution to the thought of our day.

The task of neo-scholasticism is threefold. It includes (1) patient and scholarly research in medieval manuscripts, of which much has already been competently done; (2) a sympathetic exposition of the philosophy of the medieval thinkers; and (3) a vital and convincing discussion of the problems of our day in terms of the traditional principles but with full sympathy for the contemporary urgency of these problems. Of the last almost nothing has so far been done in the English language. Of the second division, the present volume is undoubtedly a most outstanding example.

The work of translation is well done. However, someone slept heavily over the statement that "the power of free will is as wholly inadmissible as will itself" (p. 313). The original has *inamissible*—incapable of being lost. Is it quite correct to say, "the neo-scholastic subordinates it [philosophy] to theology" (p. 4)? This is rather what antagonists accuse him of. The French text says *subalterne*. On page 35 we read that "belief is a *succedaneum* of knowledge, and to substitute science for belief . . . *etc.*" This is heavy; besides for the average American philosopher at least the word *science* is not so wide

in meaning as the French *science*. But this comes very close to carping; the entire book is too excellent for that.

CRITICISM FROM OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE*

HERBERT DAVIS

During the last few years a number of eminent American scholars have challenged the methods of literary study which, for more than a generation, have been in favour on this continent. They have pointed particularly to the danger of our forgetting the study of literature by being too much concerned with literary history, or sources, or bibliography; and they have reminded us that our main business is criticism. And now, providentially, there comes to us this packet of pure criticism from Oxford and Cambridge, bearing the marks of unimpeachable nobility, unsullied by any plebeian interests, and free from all taint of menial drudgeries. Their very jackets and titles are impressive. Dr. Leavis calls his book *Revaluation*, and supports his claims to such a title by adding under the rubric "Criticism" a list of other works by himself, his wife, and his friends, and wearing as his device a pair of scales of antique pattern in which a thin scroll is delicately balanced by a quill. Mr. F. L. Lucas's yellow jacket is equally striking. On one side a list of his earlier works, first, and more expensive, his poems and plays (as befits one who boasts of his preference for "the state of mind that creates, however inadequately, . . . to the state of mind that criticizes") and below, his anthologies and critical essays; on the other side a few of his pronouncements, challenging with his hearty directness the nicer balancings of his colleague: "I loathe this view of literature as a shelf of bottles each with a different brand of alcohol inside. I like Blake often; but I like Hardy better," or flinging in our ashamed faces such indignant questions as this: "Do we honestly think Shakespeare would have quitted his 'Mermaid' for our lecture-rooms?" Mr. David Daiches,

**The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*, by F. L. Lucas, Cambridge University Press and Macmillans, 1936.

Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry, by F. R. Leavis, Chatto and Windus, 1936.

New Literary Values: Studies in Modern Literature, by David Daiches, Oliver and Boyd, 1936.

of Balliol, who appeared but recently among the critics with an admirable essay on *The Place of Meaning in Poetry*, wears his colours more modestly, but chooses nevertheless a bold title, *New Literary Values*.

It is clear, then, that even in Oxford, at last, the philologists and bibliographers and historians are not likely to be left undisturbed much longer. The critics are upon us, both there and here. We should do well, therefore, to see exactly what it is that they have to offer.

Mr. Lucas has collected in this volume four lectures and two essays, so different both in subject and treatment, as to make it difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to attempt to disguise them as a single book. The last paper, for instance, written round a short journal of a tour to Iceland, is clearly provided to give us a little holiday, "an escape from libraries," after we have worked through the main part of the book. The fourth paper, which has not been used on any previous occasion, is an interesting reply to Dr. Richards's rhapsody on Coleridge. The tone of it may be indicated by quoting one of its engaging little pleasantries: "*Coleridge on Imagination* contains, I feel, a certain amount of imagination on Coleridge." As its main intention is the baiting of Dr. Richards, with his enthusiasm for "ambiguities" and "cross-connections and links of relevance," we ought perhaps to be content to enjoy these Cambridge exercises and to overlook the sketchiness of those pages devoted to an account of the theories of imagination and fancy before Coleridge.

The first part of the book is an expansion of three lectures given before the University College of North Wales, and then repeated in a shorter form before the Royal Institution in 1935. Mr. Lucas is, of course, a practised and deservedly popular lecturer. He enlivens the most academic topics with apt and topical allusions which flow easily from his gentlemanly experience of life and letters. He decks his style with images never too startling or gaudy; he enriches it with historical references not too remote or specific, and is careful to avoid anything that might seem pedantic. We feel at once that we are in the presence of one alive to all the significance of the contemporary scene, a man of fine liberal sympathies, troubled by the things that seem to threaten the best British traditions, whether it be the mob bedevilled by picture-palaces and circulating libraries, or the steel girders and ferro-concrete of

modern industry, or the anti-Semitism of the Nazis and Dr. Goebbels's bonfires, or those vague shadows in the background—science and psychology. He is both eloquent and witty; his gaiety is shown even in the titles of his chapters. The subject is the nature of Romanticism, its past and future. But this sounds like the pedantry of the schools and must be hidden beneath some gayer disguise. The three chapters are, therefore, entitled "La Princess Lointaine," "The Crocodiles of Alachua," and "Fairies and Fungi." In these lectures he ranges widely over the whole field of literature from the Sagas to D. H. Lawrence, from Homer to Housman, flashing his wit upon ages, periods, and movements in his passage. "These Neo-Classics were not emotionally over-cold, but mentally over-alert; not unfeeling, but unsleeping. . . . Their verse is exquisite coffee in lordly porcelain; it 'cheers but not inebriates;' it is not the wine of Dionysus." We are sometimes allowed to relax comfortably upon more familiar phrases like "the blue of distance," "the muddled mediaeval mind" from the bondage of which the modern world was set free by Bacon's fatal experiment; or we are hurried through the ages in a neat sentence: "Mediaeval romance had come to seem literature for children; Metaphysical poetry, apart from a few masterpieces, was an interlude of poetry for coxcombs; it was next replaced by neo-Classic poetry—poetry for gentlemen."

Chapter v, originally the Warton Lecture read to the British Academy in 1933, is an attack upon the anarchy of present-day criticism compared with that of the past, and leads Mr. Lucas to seek a standard for the evaluation of literature, which has been accepted in the past, and still has, he feels, validity. This he finds in an ideal of mental health, sanity. " 'Good,' in life itself as well as literature, is but the name we give to qualities that confer the vital power to survive. What matters in the end seems to me health, not holiness; sanity, not sin."

This sounds very much like the creed of Samuel Butler. It seems a most reasonable standard, but, when mixed with a slightly romantic taste, produces some curious literary judgments. It makes of a Swift, for instance, a diseased genius, petty in his peevishness; it tries to draw within its own reach all the splendid humanity of Chaucer, and sentimentalizes the force and intensity of Shakespeare in the worst manner of the academic lecturer: "Chaucer can smile, even when the heart of Troilus cracks: Shakespeare can jest, even when Cleopatra comes to die."

It is a relief to turn to Dr. Leavis, who writes with deliberation and a sense of responsibility; who is not ashamed of the state of mind that criticizes, but is strenuously concerned "to forward the business of criticism," that is to say, "the profitable discussion of literature." This book is certainly the fruit of discussion rather than public lecturing, and some will resent the closed, intense atmosphere in which it was produced, the rigorous, sectarian quality of thought, the exaggerated deference to certain revered elders, fellow-disciples, or followers, and the undisguised impatience, amounting often to rudeness, when the opinions of others, outsiders, have to be considered. This should not deter us from giving full and close attention to a study of English poetry which has rare and desirable qualities, and which is carried through according to a definitely conceived plan.

It is a rare pleasure to read a book about literature, which keeps to the business of criticism, excluding gossip and biography, psychology and history. Dr. Leavis has decided exactly what he intends to do, and will not be diverted from his task. His rule is "to work as much as possible in terms of particular analysis—analysis of poems or passages, and to say nothing that cannot be related immediately to judgments about producible texts. Observing this rule and practising this self-denial the critic limits, of course, his freedom; but there are kinds of freedom he should not aspire to, and the discipline, while not preventing his saying anything that he should in the end find himself needing to say, enables him to say it with a force of relevance and an edged economy not otherwise attainable." This is altogether admirable, as admirable as it is rare; and it is Dr. Leavis's achievement that he keeps his word. But, it may be said, the results obtained do not depend merely on the excellence of a method but on the skill of the person using it. What are the qualifications required for success in this very subtle art of literary analysis? Dr. Richards's experiments, as recorded in his *Practical Criticism*, show what a strange variety of interpretations a poem is subject to, when submitted in this direct way to different persons for analysis. A knowledge of literary technique or of literary history or of the history of language does not necessarily make a good reader of poetry. Even the ability to write good poetry does not always enable a man to read properly the poetry of another age. Even the most thorough study of the methods of criticism from Aristotle to Mr. Eliot may

not produce a good critic. There are no marks by which we can be sure beforehand that a man will be a good critic; he can be judged by his work only when he has done it.

Dr. Leavis has the disadvantage of having been judged and condemned by many of his readers already on account of his very positive assertions in a former volume, *New Bearings in English Poetry*. Such readers will start with a strong bias against his *Revaluations*, especially as he makes it clear that the design of this book and the choice of material for analysis depend upon the attitude to contemporary literature adopted in that book. He has already placed the main figures in the foreground of his picture, and now he is concerned to complete the design by a piece of perspective—"to complete the account of the present of English poetry with the correlated account of the past." There is an appearance of great rigour and finality about all this. A good deal is sacrificed to the modern taste for clean lines and a great simplicity of design; but at least there can be no complaint about undue academic caution.

The picture of the development of English poetry, which results from his analysis, is doubtless intended as an emphatic challenge. Shakespeare, though not dealt with here, we are asked to accept as "the pre-eminently English poet." Otherwise Dr. Leavis is ready to exclude for his purpose everything before Donne and after Keats. "Spenser is too simple a fact to need examining afresh;" Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites do not offer "any very interesting local life for inspection." Within these limits the most obvious distortion of the usual pattern is caused by the condemnation of Milton's verse and the fresh claims put forward on behalf of Pope. The kind of rehabilitation of Pope at the hands of Lytton Strachey and Miss Sitwell is contemptuously brushed aside, is indeed added to the tale of Pope's bad luck. We are asked here to make a fresh approach, first to remove the label "satirist" and to begin with a consideration of "the rare fineness" of the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*. I do not think anyone can follow the careful analysis of this poem without being impelled to read it again with a fresh awareness of Pope's connection with the seventeenth century, "his reconciliation of Metaphysical wit with the Polite," and the fitness of his exalted decorum of manner. But I doubt whether the examination of this poem and of passages from Pope's *Epistles* and from the *Dunciad* will seem to justify an

idealization of Pope's art and of the Augustan civilization it expresses, such as this: "The same inspiration informs the whole: the ideal (generally shared and not hopelessly removed from the actual) of a civilization in which Art and Nature, Beauty and Use, Industry and Decorum, should be reconciled, and humane culture, even in its most refined forms, be kept appropriately aware of its derivation from and dependence on the culture of the soil." This fine sentiment of admiration for Augustanism hardly seems to carry Dr. Leavis himself very far, as in the next chapter he writes very differently under the influence of the verse of Swift. "In the absence of the superficial Augustan urbanity the Augustan assurance lies exposed as a spiritual poverty, its hollowness brought out by Swift's very force." Perhaps Swift—even if we agree that he is not a great poet—as much as Pope is an authentic representative of his age, a voice whose rougher and more emphatic tone provides us with a contemporary criticism of Augustanism we may not lightly set aside.

In analysing the style of *Paradise Lost*, Dr. Leavis repeats and elaborates Mr. Eliot's charge of "magniloquence," and Mr. Murry's complaint that the insistence of Milton's powerful rhythmical beat is often a hindrance to our understanding of his meaning. He stresses further the dulness and monotony of Milton's verse in a way that is evidently intended to check the devotion of his worshippers. They are not likely, however, to be so easily convinced that "the extreme and consistent remoteness of Milton's medium from any English that was ever spoken" necessarily shows an "impoverishment of sensibility." Of course, Milton is rhetorical—and this may be allowed to be incompatible with sharp concrete realization; he uses rhetoric for his special purpose and would have defended it much as Burke was later to do, by associating sublimity with certain effects of obscurity, and perhaps by retorting with the taunt that "a clear idea is another name for a little idea."

It is hardly an exaggeration to suggest that this attempt to set aside Milton is the source of all Dr. Leavis's heresies. It accounts for the one-sidedness of his account of seventeenth-century poetry; it affects equally his studies of Wordsworth and Keats and Shelley. Though often excellent in the minute analysis of specific passages, they leave us with the impression that the choice of material for analysis, and the mood in which the analysis is made, are alike under the influence of a preconceived design,

a pattern arranged so as to emphasize certain perspectives and exclude others. The line of wit in the seventeenth century, the Augustan tradition in the eighteenth, are clearly traced; the Shakespearean tradition is never forgotten, but the "Spenserian-Miltonic line running through Hyperion to Tennyson" is left as a dark shadow from which at every stage debilitating and corrupting influences are likely to come. There is no attempt to meet the challenge of that traditional view, first stated by Dryden, which carries back the Spenserian-Miltonic line to the very source of English poetry in Chaucer. But to introduce this perspective in its proper place would require a different arrangement of the contemporary poets in the foreground of Dr. Leavis's sketch.

Mr. Daiches is not less seriously concerned with the problems of the critic in his *Studies in Modern Literature*; he also employs a method of formal analysis which can be applied as well to *Ulysses*, or to a short story of Katherine Mansfield, as to modern poetry. His findings are sometimes like those of Dr. Leavis, but he states them in a less personal manner, and seems capable of larger sympathies. By comparing the reaction against Victorian poetry, for instance, with the twofold reaction against Spenserian poetry, he throws light upon the appeal of Hopkins and the influence of Pound and Eliot, without forgetting the earlier reaction evident in the work of Hardy and Housman; and he is not afraid to call attention to the importance of Whitman: "For all his influence on the run and feel of the lines in modern poetry, Hopkins does not seem to have had as much influence on details of arrangement and structure as another poet whom both poets and critics of today seem very reluctant to mention: I mean Walt Whitman. To any one who comes to contemporary verse after reading Whitman the influence seems obvious and overwhelming."

Mr. Daiches writes always as one thoroughly conscious of "the difficulties involved in making even the slightest literary judgment." He is content with a quiet simplicity of statement, free from arrogance or fashionable prejudice. He does not make the common mistake of feeling satisfied that he knows all about the business of criticism as soon as he has discovered for himself a method. He reminds us, indeed, "that it matters very much less what method [the critic] adopts in endeavouring to explain and evaluate the work for the reader than what mental processes he undergoes himself before he begins to talk at all. He must allow the work

to express itself completely, to deliver its message and present its case, and then he must ask himself: What has this writer done here?" And he points out also that "only a complete metaphysic will enable him to translate [his judgment] into terms of value." This is a real challenge; and, because he has felt it himself, Mr. Daiches approaches his task always with humility and asks that we should treat his discussions as suggestive rather than final. In emphasizing the connection between literature and life—"literature has its own relation to life—closer than that of psychology or philosophy—and it is precisely in order that this relation should not be obscured that its uniqueness should be understood and appreciated"—he is careful to make it clear that the study of literature does not need to turn into something else and become some form of history or philosophy before it can be accepted as a serious discipline. The difficulty of criticism, as well as the delight it harbours, arises, in fact, from this very closeness to life.

But literature is also connected with belief; "the experience which is the theme of any given composition is not allowed to define its own significance but draws on a background of belief to give it objectivity and intelligibility." In elaborating this fact, Mr. Daiches shows a full understanding of the contemporary problem; the young poet, finding no such common background of belief, is driven to write for the few with whom he feels that he has something in common, or even worse is forced to draw upon his own private beliefs and associations, blindly hoping that someone else may possibly be able to gather his meaning; the critic, finding no definite standards to appeal to and confused also by the obscurity and unintelligibility of the work he is trying to judge, is liable to fall back upon some traditional attitude or stumble into the modern error of simply looking for some point or other that may, in some way or other, be regarded as "interesting."

In the face of such difficulties it is most necessary to break down that rigorous division between those who concern themselves with earlier literature as a scholarly pursuit, and those who are popularly or professionally known as critics because they deal with contemporary work. We are all alike concerned with the work both of the past and the present as a part of our present experience, and our standards and methods must be of such a kind as to fit us to deal with that experience as a whole. That this is being recognized is clear from the lively discussion which we hear on all

sides concerning the functions of scholarship and the functions of criticism; that even the older universities have not been entirely unaffected may, perhaps, be assumed from the fact that it is now possible for the Andrew Bradley Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, to begin his career by publishing two books on contemporary literature.

A HUMANISTIC SCHOOL-PLAY*

DOUGLAS BUSH

Most readers acquainted with the Tudor period are so attracted by the brilliant colour of the age of Shakespeare that the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century seem drab and dull. Even scholarly specialists, who are notoriously unmoved by hedonistic or aesthetic motives, have commonly slighted the earlier part of the century, though of late years something has been done to restore the balance. It is becoming increasingly plain that the large Italianate element in Elizabethan culture was mostly a veneer, sometimes a meretricious veneer, and that the solid framework of that culture was constructed by the sober moralists and pedagogues of the earlier age who carried on the medieval tradition and sought to combine pagan wisdom and pagan art, especially the art of rhetoric, with Christian truth and piety. In the great galaxy of continental humanists Willem de Volder (*ca.* 1493-1568), commonly known as Gnapheus or Fullonius, was not a very bright luminary, and John Palsgrave, his English translator, does not rank with Colet, More, and Linacre, but somewhere after Lily, Elyot, Ascham, and Udall. Yet both Fullonius and Palsgrave may stand as worthy representatives of the great practical educational effort of the age.

Palsgrave had contacts with a number of the great, including Erasmus. His chief patrons were his former pupil, King Henry's sister Mary, Henry himself, and Sir Thomas More, and, though he had private as well as public reasons for his antipathy to Wolsey, he achieved a comfortable share of preferment. His work on *Acolastus* was apparently done in 1539-40, in the Rectory of St.

**The Comedy of Acolastus Translated from the Latin of Fullonius by John Palsgrave*, edited, with an introduction and notes, by P. L. Carver, Ph.D. Published for the Early English Text Society by Humphrey Milford, 1936.

Dunstan's-in-the-East. Palsgrave's other title to literary fame was his *Lesclarcissement de la Langue Francoyse* (1530), a pioneer exposition of French grammar for the English student.

As the name of Hroswitha reminds us, Terence had a venerable prestige. Fullonius, to be sure, does not deal with legends of saints and martyrs, and presents the allurements of the flesh and the devil with no little gusto, but his play grows out of the humanist faith in the Christianized classics as guides to the good life and good Latin. It was Terence's style, his turn for quotable aphorisms, and his relatively inoffensive morality, which commended him to many generations of schoolmasters. But since the manners and morals of Roman comedy were not ideally fitted to mould Christian youth, there was need of partly denatured imitation. Fullonius had a large share in establishing the most popular European type of Latin school-play, that is, the adaptation of the story of the Prodigal Son to the Terentian pattern. It was an ingenious compromise, for it combined Biblical inspiration and sage moral counsel with a legitimate excuse for those lively tavern and courtesan scenes which even native morality plays could not do without.

In his long and learned introduction Dr. Carver sheds light on many shadowy passages in Palsgrave's life, and places the version of *Acolastus* solidly in its setting as an important document in Tudor educational theory and practice. His sketch of its probable or possible influence reaches from Udall up to Shakespeare—Gratiano's "a younker, or a prodigal" is one of several straws which may suggest a memory of the translation. The editor's notes are no less readable than erudite. One aspect of Palsgrave's work to which he gives special attention is of special interest to both the scholarly and the general reader (if the general reader is acquainted with the publications of the Early English Text Society). That is the value of the work as a storehouse of juicy English, notably in the way of proverbial phrases. Every Tudor writer and reader loved homespun proverbial wisdom in homespun language, and Palsgrave was one of the many men of the time who instinctively made saws from Erasmus's *Adagies* sound no less English than the products of native folk-wit. This bachelor of divinity and royal chaplain had his share of that gift which made North's Plutarch and Florio's Montaigne what they are. Although the translator's pedagogical duty obliges him to give literal and less literal renderings of every Latin phrase, so that he turns around two or three times

before every step forward, the text makes amusing reading. The beggarly friend of Terence's parasite is no longer a Graeco-Roman type when he complains in this fashion:

> I am so soore forhungered, that my bealy weneth my throte is cutte: my bely or panche is all wasted quyte up or shronke to gether (with lankenesse) for hunger or wante of meate my stomake belcheth or cryeth out (for the fulnes of wynde that is in it for emptynesse) farthermore my chekes that hanged syde downe, do shrynke awaye .i. where as I was wonte to be blobbe cheked or haue foggy chekes (that shaked as I went) they be nowe shronke up, or drawen to gether, lyke fleshe that doth putrifie or corrupt for extreme leannesse (and) by the churche of Pollux, my teeth ytche (for desyre they haue to be sette a worke).

This is not the style of most modern divines, nor of those modern translators who rattle "the dry Bohns of the classics."

THE THIRD REICH[1]

A. Brady

On National Socialism a substantial body of scholarly literature in English is emerging, which presents at least a tentative interpretation of the political system and *Weltanschauung* that replaced those of the Weimar Republic. Significant among recent studies are the books by F. L. Schuman, Morstein Marx, and Michael Florinsky. The *Nazi Dictatorship*, by Professor Schuman of Chicago, was first published in 1935 and has recently appeared in a revised edition. It may justly claim to be the most illuminating textbook on the Fascist state in its German form, vividly written, comprehensive in its treatment, and well documented. In its abundant borrowing of the jargon of psychiatric clinics, it bears the unmistakable stamp of the Chicago School of Political Science. Professor Schuman, however, has his feet on the ground. Despite a fondness—doubtless accentuated by his subject—for explaining the political action of individuals by reference to masochism, sadism, neurotic guilt-feeling, psychic insecurity, paranoia, and other such things, he does not slip, like his learned colleague, Professor Lass-

[1] *The Nazi Dictatorship*, by Frederick L. Schuman, Knopf, 1935 (rev. ed. 1936).
Government in the Third Reich, by Fritz Morstein Marx, McGraw-Hill, 1936.
Fascism and National Socialism: A Study of the Economic and Social Policies of the Totalitarian State, by Michael T. Florinsky, Macmillan, 1936.

well,[2] into extravagant psycho-analytical explanations. *Government in the Third Reich* by Morstein Marx, an *émigré* scholar and former administrator, is modest in size, but acute and intelligent in interpretation. While describing with insight the political pattern of the dictatorship offered in Germany as a substitute for democracy, it is much too sketchy in weighing the interacting economic and social forces which determine the present vitality of that dictatorship. One also wishes that the book had traced in more detail the philosophical ancestry of the doctrine of leadership to its more remote but sturdy roots in the history of German thought, for *Fürer und Gefolgschaft* are not new things. But one must not expect too much within one hundred and fifty pages. In *Fascism and National Socialism* Michael Florinsky, of Columbia University, ventures on the worthy task of comparing the economic and social policies of contemporary Germany and Italy, and incidentally provides an excellent supplement to the work of the other authors because he is strongest where they are weakest, in analysing the economics of the totalitarian state.[3]

All these writers consider it as self-evident that National Socialism is a product of the stresses and strains imposed on the nation by the War and its aftermath. It is Germany's revolt against the attempt, in the Treaty of Versailles, to make her inferior to the great powers of Europe, to place on her the guilt of 1914, and to damage her economy by financial and other exactions. The leaders of the Republic had just as sincerely sought equality and dignity for the German nation as those of the Third Reich, but unfortunately in their methods they had the undramatic qualities of democracy; they were less ready to cultivate collective delusions and exploit national neuroses; and in any case they laboured under the lasting stigma of being responsible for the humiliating peace. The distinguished sociologist, Professor Max Weber, made the grim prediction in 1918, that, if German democracy concluded a bad peace, it would forfeit its future; and the prediction has been fulfilled to the letter. Sundry other evident influences helped to destroy the

[2]See H. D. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*, 1930, and *World Politics and Personal Insecurity*, 1935.

[3]Gaetano Salvemini, *Under the Axe of Fascism*, New York, Viking Press, 1936, is the most critical work published in 1936 on Italian Fascism. It offers a fund of material to assist in comparisons between the Italian and German types of Fascism.

Republic: the inflation with its demoralizing of the middle class, who might otherwise have cherished liberal institutions; the failure of the constitution to insure strong leadership at a time when leadership was almost the sole requisite for democracy; the ubiquitous mood of social unrest bred by the War, the Russian Revolution, and the mounting figures of unemployment in a disorganized economy; the reliance of the republican government on a Praetorian guard, drawn from the old army with its ill-concealed hostility to what it designated as *Das System*.

But a fact which perhaps none of these authors adequately emphasizes, although it is not neglected by Professor Schuman, is the extent to which the roots of Fascism go back beyond 1914. They are to be found in the deep social tensions within modern industrial civilization, which were suddenly accentuated in certain countries and not created by the War; and in Germany especially it was inevitable that, when these tensions reached a crisis, their resolution would be sought in the creation of a more rigid authoritarian state than ever existed in the past. In the conditions there prevailing, the Leviathan of Thomas Hobbes could come to life. Some of the tensions result from the internal social struggle over the distribution of wealth, which is sharpened where the ideology of Communism becomes a threat to the established order. Related to that phase of the class-struggle is the conflict between the forces of nationalism and those of an emerging world economy. Social groups which suffer from the increasing organization of international economic life, or from violent dislocations to that life, seek protection through the institutions of the national state, and are ready to exalt the power that aids them in stemming tendencies which threaten their security. The active rôle of peasants and *petite bourgeoisie* in the Fascist movements of both Germany and Italy, is illustrative of the fact, and these classes would similarly have asserted themselves in any economic crisis, war or no war.

The analysis by Morstein Marx indicates the difficulty of explaining the *Fürerstaat* in terms of traditional political theory. Goebbels, evidently with his accustomed gravity, described it as "the most enobled form of a modern European democracy." More truly it is a plebiscitic autocracy. Unquestioning acceptance of authority from above is the first duty of the Aryan of the Third Reich. On obedience, not on liberties, is the emphasis laid. Even the Party itself, unlike the Communist party of Russia, has been

profoundly anti-democratic in its structure. With the Prussian army as a model, it exacts obedience alone from the rank and file, and dispenses with balloting at conventions. Its leaders still cling to the term democracy, but in a strictly peculiar sense that defies the usual categories of political science. Hitler, for example, is quoted as saying: "The movement represents, in small things and in large, the fundamental principle of Germanic democracy: the election of the leader, but unlimited authority in his hands."

It has been superficially assumed that the *Fürerstaat*, with its totalitarianism, is an example of the Hegelian state, and support for the assumption has been sought in such lyric explanations of Hitler's colleagues as the following from the Reich minister Dr. Frank:

> If we speak of a millenium, let us bear in mind what the word *Jahrtausend* signifies: no one among us lives for himself; each of us lives only for his people. No one lives for his own happiness; each lives only for the happiness of the community. No one among us can say as he may have done before: "My happiness lies in my home, in my business, in my profession." No—we live beyond space and time in the millenial destiny of our people!

It is impossible to extract much meaning from such rhapsodies. The broad fact is that the theorists of National Socialism repudiate Hegel. Instead of maintaining that the final resort of authority is in the state, they echo Hitler's words: "We command the state"—*we* being the Party, monolithic in character. They speak of a "tripartite structure," People, Party, and State, combined in the person of the *Fürer*. Moreover, their emphasis upon pragmatism and opportunism leaves scant room for Hegel's interpretation of the state as the incorporation of the ethical imperative.

Since the National Socialists really act first and philosophize afterwards, it is more profitable to penetrate below their formal political theory to the crucial question, What social groups command power in the Third Reich? Is the Nazi government, as the Marxists contend, merely a hurried conspiracy of the great financiers and industrialists to keep the labourers in subjection and beat back the waves of Communism? The contention is true in only a qualified way. The movement took its rise among the *petite bourgeoisie*, and won special support among the members of this class in the areas of the country, like the northern and eastern borders, where patriotism was most inflamed.[4] Hitler was glad to obtain

[4]See Schuman, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, p. 145, for an analysis of voting strength per region in 1930.

the financial aid of Aust, Geheimrat Kuhlo, Mutschmann, Edwin Bechstein, Hugenberg, Fritz Thyssen, and other industrial magnates, whose assistance had the twofold effect of placing a break upon any leftist tendencies within the movement and of aiding immensely the propagandist activities of the Party.[5] But the great German industrialists, like their species elsewhere, were opportunists. They had supported every party in the Republic except the Communists, and they gave special assistance to Hitler only when they realized that he was likely to win. Some of them were doubtless early attracted by parts of his programme. A movement that promised re-armament, imperialism, and the destruction of Marxism, would necessarily receive the blessing of the steel barons, who, in supporting the Party, were confident that they could render innocuous to their own interests any socialist planks in the programme. But the ordinary capitalist at the outset had little reason to be attracted to such a bizarre party with its violently belligerent nationalism. His interest, however, became real enough when he saw that it was a mass movement destined to control the state.

All these studies make it evident that the *Fürerstaat* is the product of mass action, astutely directed by a party of *petits bourgeois* who had come to master the most effective techniques of popular persuasion, and were aided and influenced by affluent capitalists and Junkers. It is less force than propaganda that made and maintains the Third Reich. This one may contend without ignoring the tactics of terror used in the early Nazi regime. The propaganda since 1933 has been directed to achieve the aim of Goebbels, "one single public opinion," or, as he describes it in another place, "a monoform national will." The measures adopted to manufacture unanimity and compliance follow patterns not available in the same major degree to a party in the democratic state. The destruction, after the Reichstag fire, of the opposition press, made up of some fifty Communist and one hundred and thirty Social Democratic newspapers, was a necessary preliminary step to the meticulous regimentation of the remaining papers. The mobilization of the radio was carried out with no less German thoroughness. About thirty plants undertook the manufacture of "people's re-

[5]Professor Schuman illustrates adequately Hitler's relations with the great industrialists and the criticism which he thereby incurred from the more radical members, such as the Strasser brothers (see p. 134). The leftists were gradually pushed from a position of influence in the Party.

ceivers" at a specially low price, with the result that the number of sets increased more than a million in a single year (1934). These private receivers, combined with loud speakers in public squares and meeting-halls, allowed the *Fürer*, it has been estimated, to address fifty-six million people. Little wonder the boast of the national broadcasting chief: "With the radio we have destroyed the spirit of rebellion." Then there is the co-ordinating of education, whereby the minister charged with that subject becomes undisputed master over the curriculum and personnel of all German universities and every village school. Under his influence even mathematics recognizes its "service to racial erudition."

The economic corollary of the *Fürerstaat* is a highly cartelized and regimented economy. National Socialism might at the outset flirt with the *petit bourgeois* ideas of breaking up trusts, or their nationalization, but the influence of the great industrialists on Hitler and the cause of "national freedom" has relegated these ideas to the background. Sombart has suggested that Fascism is "the highest synthesis of state power and authority compatible with the capitalist system." The Third Reich retains the capitalist system in the sense that confidence is placed in private ownership and profit as the dynamic of the economy, but it is a modified confidence, not because of any substantial intrusion of real Socialism but because the government submits the German industrialist and merchant to extensive regulation. The state and the economy are organized with attention to the one prime objective of national preparedness, and that end requires a special economic balance within the state, to which all other ends are subordinate. Every major portion of Nazi policy is intended to further the co-ordination of the economy for war. The National Labour Act, for example, was a grand piece of political expediency, for, to the extent that it observed the rights of labour, it did so because a balance of economic forces to insure preparedness could not long survive at the expense of labour. Likewise Walter Darré's organization of the Food Estate (*Reichsnährstand*) in 1933, with its subsidiary food cartels, fitted in consistently with the claims of a war-economy.

A state which directs so many of its resources to military preparedness in a partially closed economy, is obviously resting on precarious foundations. The relative flexibility in prices and investment, characteristic of free capitalism, is lost, although the Third Reich has this compensation, that the destruction of genuine

trade unionism renders much easier the reduction of wages. While nominal wage-rates have not been generally cut, real wages, owing to the government policy of emphasizing importation of raw materials for re-armament rather than foodstuffs, have fallen.[6] "We are making history, not butter," is Goebbels's defence. "A fat belly counts less from a historic viewpoint than a cannon." Making history in that fashion places on the working classes the brunt of the struggle. How long these classes will be content with Nazi history instead of butter, is unpredictable, but it is safe to conclude that the impulse for any vital change in the Third Reich must come from below.

[6]See the evidence presented by Schuman (pp. 404, 477-8), and Florinsky (p. 150).